

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND VALIDATION OF A SCHOOL LEADER'S  
RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE FACILITATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

BY SCHOOL STAFF

by

DEANNA L. GOOCH

B.S., Kansas State University, 1983  
M.S., Friends University, 1997

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Leadership  
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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## **Abstract**

Many school leaders do not understand their rights and responsibilities to facilitate social media use by their staff in P-12 education. This dissertation was designed to research, develop, and validate a resource guide school leaders can use to facilitate social media use by school staff. *Research, Development, and Validation of a School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff* was developed using the research and development (R & D) methodology by Gall, Borg, and Gall (2003) and Dick and Carey (2009). The seven steps in the R & D cycle included: (1) research analysis, needs assessment, and proof of concept; (2) product planning and design; (3) preliminary product development; (4) preliminary field testing; (5) product revision; (6) main field testing; and (7) the final product revision (Gall, Borg & Gall, 2003).

An analysis of the literature, needs assessment questionnaire, and proof of concept results provided information used to develop the resource guide design. This initial design was then evaluated by preliminary field testers (social media experts) using a Likert scale and open-ended questions to provide feedback. Revisions were prepared based on their responses. A main field test was then conducted with additional social media experts. Final revisions were made based on this feedback.

Major conclusions of this study included the following: (1) school leaders need more resources to understand their rights and responsibilities concerning social media use by staff; (2) this resource guide for school leaders should include legal information, case studies, and vocabulary used in the social media world; (3) and the R & D process produced a resource guide school leaders can use to understand their rights and responsibilities concerning social media use by staff.

The resource guide's information includes (1) background on social media, (2) legal aspects of social media use by staff, (3) social media promising practices, (4) digital citizenship, (5) emergence of issues and challenges in social media, and (5) how employers can avoid adverse employment actions. The focus of the resource guide is school leaders must understand their rights and responsibilities in guiding social media use by staff members.

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Approved by:

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to two very special women. First, I dedicate this to my mother, Jean Ann Kimple. Though you left this earth three months before I began my doctoral studies, you continue to be a positive guiding force in my life in all that I do. Thank you for always emphasizing the importance of education and perseverance.

Secondly, I dedicate this to my wonderful daughter, Lauren. You continue to make my heart soar. I am so proud of you. You, like your grandmother, are a profoundly positive force in my life. This is for the two of you.

# **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

## **Introduction to the Study**

Should a school district involve itself with what the teachers are posting on social media sites after school hours? Is it the school district's responsibility to monitor the use of social media by staff as well as students? As the popularity and use of social media grows exponentially, it will remain the business of the school district to ensure that the staff appropriately uses all Web 2.0 tools, including social media. (Web 2.0 websites were made to (a) depend upon the membership of mass groups of users instead of upon centrally controlled content providers, (b) aggregate and remix content from various sources, and (c) more intensely network users and content together. [O'Reilly, 2007])

How much leeway do educators have in using social media? What if their postings affect the district? For example, what if a teacher's choice of posts discloses confidential personnel or student records or results in a disruption to the school environment? Or what if it impairs the teacher's actual ability to perform his or her duties? Just how much freedom exists for a district to discipline its teachers for online conduct when the conduct takes place off-duty? How much freedom of speech do educators have, and how far do their rights of privacy extend when they use social media?

Interestingly, this research began in 2008 when one of the best known social media sites, Facebook, was only four years old and boasted 8 million users. (Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages, and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.[whatis.com]) By 2011, when the overview of the literature for this paper was in full force, Facebook had exploded into a monstrous social media site with over 500 million users (Facebook statistics page,



<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>). While this type of exponential growth may not be as prevalent in other social media, the fact remains that the use of all types of social media continues to grow rapidly. In the following chapters, information is presented to help answer these questions. This resource guide was created with these questions and concerns in mind, and the resource guide will provide school leaders with the answers to these questions. There are ways for school staff to appropriately use social media in and out of a school setting, and there are ways for school staff to inappropriately use social media in or out of school. This resource guide will provide school leaders information to help them facilitate the proper use of social media by their staff members.

## **Leadership**

School leaders must understand the impact that social media has had on education. Our society is embracing this type of communication which leads to anytime/anyone/anywhere learning and collaboration. Though some may say this may be more of a fad than a trend, Larry Cuban, an expert on educational technology, warns against the “danger of viewing everything as a passing fad” (Cuban, 1986, p. 73). Social media is obviously a trend which will lead toward a different way of learning for our students and staff.

Educational leadership needs to be prepared to manage the use of social media by their staff members. Without leadership, this type of technology will not be used effectively to benefit student learning. The goal of this researcher was to develop a tool that helps leadership understand the consequences of inappropriate use of social media by their staff while helping them to understand how social media can be used as a positive tool as well. By increasing their understanding the resource guide will assist leader in facilitating the use of social media amongst their staff members.

Effective school leaders must be adept at managing the fiscal, physical, and human resources in schools. The types of leaders who keep their schools in working order are seen as doing a good job of protecting the school from outside sources (Roberts in Senge, Camgbron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000). They handle all issues that might arise in a school. Others in their school look to them for guidance, to provide a vision, and to do what it takes to get others to agree to this vision.

Transformational leadership is needed. Transformational leaders place a greater emphasis on developing the people in an organization. These leaders have more of a “systems perspective,” which helps them envision all the pieces of their organization and how they interact. This type of systems thinking is the “ability to understand the hidden dynamics of complex systems” and the capacity to find credence in those systems (Roberts in Senge et al., 2000, p. 415). Leaders help members in an organization to clarify the vision for that organization and to do what it takes to move the organization forward.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The rapid growth in the use of social media in society is occurring among students and educational staff alike, and there are many ways to learn about the use of these types of media. Most of the information available on how to use social media does not specifically address how a school leader should facilitate its use by school staff. Information is emerging in articles and on blogs addressing the likelihood that more and more staff members are using social media to help students learn. It is time for school leaders to help guide this endeavor effectively and safely.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study’s purpose was to research, develop, and validate a school leader’s resource guide for the facilitation of social media use by a school staff. This resource will help school

leaders guide their staff in the more effective, safe uses of social media in a school setting. The guide was presented in a way to make it as user-friendly as possible.

The toolbox metaphor was used as a practical approach for school leaders to draw upon when considering social media use by school staff members. This particular toolbox contains three drawers. These drawers illustrate the use, misuse, and abuse of social media by P-12 staff members.

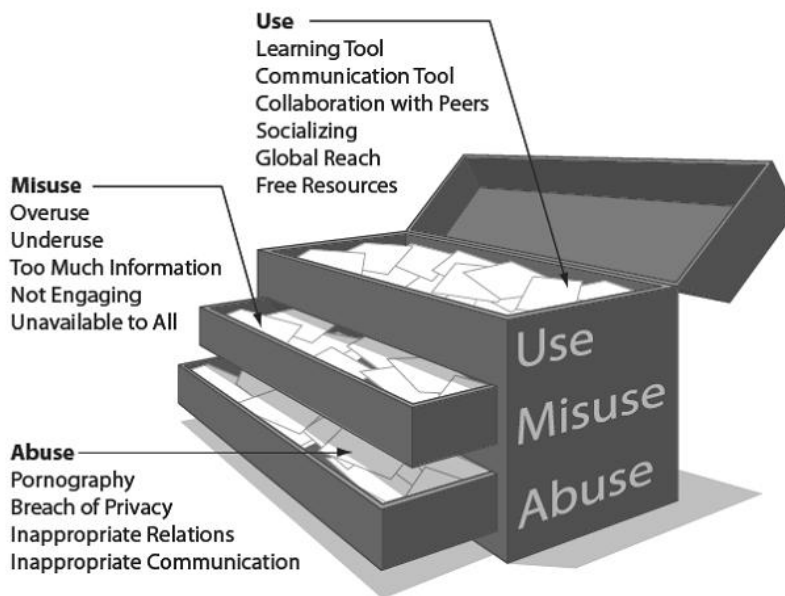
The top drawer represents “top drawer” ideas, those that an educator could use, and perhaps should use. These social media uses are not only legal and ethical, but will also lead to student engagement and learning. They could also be those uses that bring about effective staff development or help communicate with parents and other stakeholders in a student’s education. This is the “use” drawer. For example, principals can easily connect with other school leaders by reaching out for ideas using social media. Twitter (a popular instant messaging system that lets a person send a brief text message) is used extensively by Principal Eric Sheninger, the Principal at New Milford High School in New Jersey. Using Twitter to showcase what his school is doing has helped his district gain international attention. “In the past we operated in a vacuum,” he says, but now, “you have major organizations and some of the best researchers in the field on Twitter, and that starts more conversations about improving professional practice. Without Twitter we would not have gotten attention from those stakeholders” (Shein, 2012, p. 39).

The second or “middle drawer” ideas are those that may or may not be appropriate or useful, depending on the specifics of the use. For example, some social media use on topics may or may not be appropriate due to the age of the student. There may also be concerns with the potential volatility of the subject, or even the attitude of a particular region or culture. This is potentially the “misuse” drawer. A specific misuse of social media occurs when school leaders

are closed off from learning about the benefits of social media. When administrators were asked, “How do you use Social Media?” the results were as follows: 54 percent used social media to get news; 74.2 percent used social media to connect with peers; 59.6 percent said they used social media to find resources; and 66.7 percent said they used it for personal use (Shein, 2012). Not using social media limits a school leader’s ability to keep up with other school leaders.

The third or “bottom drawer” ideas are those that educators should avoid. Bottom drawer uses include those that do not protect privacy rights of students or infringe on the civil or individual rights of others. These uses may also be illegal due to inappropriate content. This is the “abuse” drawer. An obvious example of a teacher abusing the use of social media was reported on February 10, 2011, in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* by reporter Jeremy Roebuck. He reported the story about Natalie Munroe, an area teacher, who had posted in her personal blog (a personal journal kept on the Internet) that she would like to call her students “ratlike,” “frightfully dim,” or “dunderheads” on their report cards. Ms. Munroe also wrote that she wished she could make the following comments about students so that parents could gain greater insight into how their children were performing in school: “I am concerned that your kid is going to come in one day and open fire on the school. (Wish I was kidding.)” She also posted, “I called out sick a couple of days just to avoid your son,” and “There’s no other way to say this: I hate your kid” (Meyer, 2011, p. 2).

**Figure 1 Toolbox metaphor – use, misuse and abuse**



### **Target Audience**

The target audience for this resource guide is school leaders interested in facilitating social media use by their school staff. School leaders would include district-level leaders, building-level leaders, teacher leaders, and any other educational professionals interested in the appropriate use of social media by school staff.

### **Research Questions**

To efficiently research, develop and validate this type of school leader’s resource guide, this study was directed by the following inquiry:

- What information do school leaders need to know to effectively facilitate the use of social media by school staff?
- What type of resource guide would help school leaders facilitate the use of social media by school staff?

### **Significance of the Study**

The research presented in chapter 2 indicates the need for appropriate use of social media by school staff. However, the research provides few resources which could help school leaders facilitate the use of social media by school staff. Therefore, school leaders at both the building- and district-level needed a type of resource guide to give them practical information to share with their staff members.

The resulting resource guide provides school leaders, as well as anyone in the field of education, with necessary information to appropriately use social media. Superintendents as well as others under their supervision could use this resource guide to carefully lead staff members through some of the social media challenges and promising practices. University staff could use this resource guide to help future administrators prepare themselves to facilitate the use of social media by school staff. After doing an extensive literature review on the topic, the message remained that school leaders will need assistance providing informed guidance in this area. The social media world is ever-changing, and the resource guide itself was designed with this in mind.

School leaders must know that there are ways for school staff to appropriately use social media in and out of a school setting, and there are ways for school staff to inappropriately use social media in or out of school. The resource guide will provide school leaders information to help them facilitate the proper use of social media by their staff members. The hope is that this

guide will provide school leaders the confidence to move their teachers safely forward into the social media world where their students reside.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study's organization followed recommendations set up by Gall, Borg, and Gall's (2003) research and development (R & D) methodology for developing educational products. The researcher chose this research process with the goal of developing a quality product designed to meet a specific educational need.

Research and development is the process of researching consumer needs and then developing products to fulfill those needs. The purpose of R & D efforts in education is not to formulate or test theory but to develop effective products for use in schools.

School personnel, who are the consumers of R & D endeavors, may for the first time really see the value of educational research (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009, p. 18).

The organization for this research was set up in the following way:

Chapter 1: Introduction. Chapter 1 consists of an introduction, a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, target audience, research questions, significance of the study, organization of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and the summary.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature. Chapter 2 includes a thorough review of the literature as follows: (1) an introduction to what social media is, its history, and its uses in schools; (2) the need for a resource guide and how students, teachers and school leaders are using social media; (3) legal aspects of social media use in P-12 education; (4) promising practices; (5) challenges; (6) digital citizenship; (7) emergence of issues; and (8) a summary of why this resource guide is needed.

Chapter 3: Development and Validation of the Resource Guide. Chapter 3 describes the research and development methodology used to research, product planning and design, product development, field test, revise, validate, and disseminate the resource guide.

Chapter 4: Validated Resource Guide. *School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff.* Chapter 4 is the validated product, the actual resource guide, to be used by school leaders to facilitate social media with their staff members.

Chapter 5: Conclusion. Chapter 5 summarized the activities, research questions and results, reflections, conclusions, dissemination of the resource guide, and recommendations for further inquiry.

### **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to develop, test, and validate a practical resource guide to be used by school leaders to facilitate social media use by their school staff. The study included information about what school staff needs to know concerning legal issues, promising practices, challenges, digital citizenship, and emerging issues. As staff members increase their use of social media, school leaders must be equipped to facilitate this use, and they need to know when it is their right or responsibility to intervene.

This study was limited to the research, development and validation of a school leader's resource guide, and was not intended to research how to deal specifically with the change process that might be needed to implement the use of social media into a school. Additionally, the resource guide was created in a way to incorporate the idea of the ever-changing world of social media use. It was meant to be more a dynamic guide than a static presentation of facts and concepts. For that reason, there was a space created after each section for timely updates.



## Summary

In summary, the development of a resource guide to help school leaders to facilitate social media has the potential to be of great use to school leaders. As a director of human resources, this researcher knows the need for a product such as this. On numerous occasions school leaders have questioned what is appropriate, verging on inappropriate, and completely inappropriate when discussing the use of social media by their staff members. Others in the field of human resources, as well as additional district-level personnel, need to understand the use of social media since it is being used by students and staff in growing numbers.

The development of this product focused on its practical use, and revisions were done at the suggestion of those practitioners who will be using it. This research methodology lends itself well to something that, in the end, should be used by practitioners who are presently leading our schools. As more staff members get into professional or legal trouble when using social media, it is more and more important for school leaders to know how to guide school staff in the appropriate use of social media in or out of school. Leaders must know when they have the right and responsibility to intervene. The resource guide will provide school leaders information to help them facilitate the proper use of social media by their staff members

Chapter 2 further explains the specific research and literature pertaining to social media, surrounding legal issues, promising practices, challenges, digital citizenship, and emergence of issues. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used from the research analysis, needs assessment and proof of concept, to the product planning and design, then to the preliminary product development, preliminary field test, product revision, and main field test. Chapter 3 concludes with the final product revision and dissemination. Chapter 4 features *The School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff*. Finally, Chapter 5

summarizes the activities, research questions and results, reflections, conclusions, dissemination of the resource guide, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

### Introduction

There is a great need for users of social media to utilize it correctly. The proper use of social media by school staff can positively impact student learning. Sadly, school staff members have not always used social media to make a positive impact. Staff members have been disciplined for negative comments they made about students on social media. A Massachusetts high school teacher spouted off about her students being “germ bags” and the parents as “snobby and arrogant.” The reaction from the community resulted in the teacher resigning. A sociology instructor in Pennsylvania was suspended after updating her social media site with complaints about work that alluded to violence. Her Facebook faux pas went so far as to include, “Does anyone know where I can find a very discrete hit-man? Yes, it’s been that kind of day!” Then she followed it up the next month by posting, “Had a good day today. Didn’t want to kill even one student. Now Friday was a different story” (Heussner, 2010).

Staff members have lost more than employment over the misuse of digital media. A New Hampshire teacher pled guilty in July, 2010 to indecent exposure after sending nude pictures to one of her high school students. A teacher’s aide in Eagle Grove, Iowa admitted to sending obscene pictures to a student in August, 2011. A teacher in Aurora, Illinois was charged with sexual exploitation of a child after sending sexually explicit photos, or sexting, to one of her students in September, 2011 (Rasmussen, 2011).

The examples shared above are rare. However, school leaders need to know what use, misuse, and abuse of social media look like, and they need to know when it is their right and responsibility to intervene. School districts must have appropriate policies in place, and school

leaders must make certain they are prepared to facilitate proper use of all present and future types of social media by staff.

The contemporary types of social media available to educators are astounding, and many have odd names. Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, and Wikis are just a few of the more familiar names of social media used by educators, and each will be defined later in this chapter. These resources are among the social network sites (SNS) available through recent web applications and are referred to as social media. They employ Web 2.0 principles. A succinct way to describe Web 2.0 websites is that they were made to: (a) depend upon the membership of mass groups of users instead of upon centrally controlled content providers, (b) aggregate and remix content from various sources, and (c) more intensely network users and content together (O'Reilly, 2007). Students, teachers, and school leaders use social media in many purposeful ways, yet many educators still are hesitant to enter fully into the Web 2.0 world for a variety of reasons. The facilitation of social media in schools is a legitimate concern for all involved.

To research, develop, and validate this school leader's resource guide effectively, thorough discovery in all areas related to the use of social media in a school environment was conducted. The research encompassed information going back to the development of Facebook in 2004, and it continued with the study of social media through December of 2011.

Many books, journal articles, court cases, and online resources were reviewed. Additionally, Dr. Gerald Bailey, author of *Digital Citizenship in Schools* shared his beliefs with this researcher on why this type of resource is needed. In his responses to a Questionnaire for Needs Assessment (Appendix C), Dr. Bailey shared several thoughts which supported the need for this resource guide. He said, "It is paramount that school leaders work to get teachers acclimated to using social media wisely." He went on to say, "The International Society for

Technology in Education (ISTE) has indicated that social networking will be integral to the future of professional development” (G. Bailey, personal communication, February 23, 2011). He strongly encouraged this researcher to go forward with this research, and to focus on the varying areas where educators might have issues with social media in its use, misuse and abuse. Information from his book, *Digital Citizenship in Schools*, strongly influenced the recognition for the need of this type of product and has been largely used to complete the digital citizenship section of the literature review.

Additionally, information gathered from Ginger Lewman, the Education Consultant at the Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas (ESSDACK) along with Donna Whiteman, the Assistant Executive Director for Legal Services at the Kansas Association of School Boards, echoed Dr. Bailey’s opinion about the need for this type of resource guide.

The information presented in this literature review was divided into four areas. The first area introduced and described the concept of social media and its history. The second area dealt with the reasons a resource such as a guide for the facilitation of social media in schools is strongly needed. The third area gave a description of the uses of social media in P-12 education by both students and staff—both the good and the bad. The last four areas described in the literature review covered promising practices, challenges, digital citizenship, and the emergence of issues associated with social media.

## **Social Media**

**The Definition of Social Media.** The beginning stages of this study required coming to terms with the definition of social media. Experts were interviewed, resources were scoured: when the words –social media definition” were submitted in a Google search, there were more

than 6,780,000 hits. Of the many definitions presented, the following simple description came from Sam Decker, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Mass Relevance, a marketing company in Austin, Texas. His definition was shared on marketing website entitled *30 Social Media Definitions*. “Social media is digital content and interaction that is created by and between people” (Cohen, May 2011, p. 1). Many definitions were more detailed, but this one most succinctly describes the focus of the researcher. This definition focuses on what social media is, yet it does not place limits on what it can be.

Initially, this research was to focus on social networks; however, it became clear early on that the definition of social networks does not necessarily involve the use of technology and, for the purposes of this study, technology must be included. Therefore, “social media” is more fitting than the term “social network.” The crux of this research was to develop a resource guide to help school leaders facilitate the use of technology as a means of communicating and learning inside and outside the school environment. The word “social” implies the sharing of information that involves networking, and the word “media” insinuates the use of technology.

**The History of Social Media.** The concept of social media was something envisioned by those scientists and engineers whose work eventually led to the creation of the Internet. In the book *The Facebook Effect: The Inside Story of the Company That is Connecting the World*, David Kirkpatrick (2010) wrote:

In a 1968 essay by J.C.R. Licklider and Robert W. Taylor titled *The Computer as Communication Device*, the authors asked, “What will online interactive communities be like? In most fields they will consist of geographically separated members, sometimes grouped in small clusters and sometimes working individually. They will be communities not of common location, but of common interest.” The article crept further

toward the concept of social networking when it said, “You will not send a letter or a telegram; you will simply identify the people whose files should be linked to yours.” As a key employee in the Advance Research Projects Agency of the Department of Defense, Licklider helped conceive and fund what became the ARPAnet, which in turn led to the Internet (p. 66).

Usenet, which preceded the World Wide Web, began in 1979, and it allowed people to post communications to other people in groups set up for particular topics. And in 1987 the term virtual community was coined in an essay by Howard Rheingold. He described this new experience of a *virtual community* as “a group of people who may or may not meet one another face to face,” and went on to also mention how they would be able to “exchange words and ideas through the mediation of computer bulletin boards and networks” (Kirkpatrick, 2010, p. 67).

The postal service in France was the first to bring this type of virtual communication to a mass consumer audience when it introduced a national online service, Minitel, in 1982. In 1985 America Online was introduced, and then the floodgates began to open, providing numerous other online communication opportunities. By the early 1990s, most persons with computers were beginning to use electronic mail. Other uses for these types of communication pathways began with Match.com in 1994 (an online dating social network), with Classmates.com in 1995 (an online class reunion network), and by 1997 the modern social networking era was here. The early 2000s brought numerous online friendship and people connecting sites such as Friendster, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and MySpace, all in 2003.

One certainly cannot introduce the concept of social networking without giving more than a bit of time to Mark Zuckerberg’s Facebook. This social network site was initially

launched in February of 2004, under the name “Thefacebook.” Facebook is currently the world’s largest social networking site. Facebook has over 500 million users, with 70 percent of those users living outside the United States as of February 2011. Thefacebook had a name change, becoming Facebook, and a new look with the “partly pixelated head of Al Pacino in the upper left corner of the screen” in September of 2005 (Kirkpatrick, 2010, p. 145). With over a half billion users on the planet Earth, and revenues of nearly \$1 billion annually, Facebook has become the generic name for social networks, just as “Kleenex” is to tissues.

Adding to the Facebook frenzy of communication options are other social media such as the 140-character world of Twitter, MySpace (an online community which allows friends to keep in touch, initially started as a way for bands to promote their music), cell-phone texting (the sending of typed messages via a cell phone), Instant Messaging (real-time text messaging via the Internet), and blogging. The preceding, along with a seemingly endless list of other social media, are being used to connect people and ideas using technology.

Though the short history of social media indicates it was used on post-secondary campuses before it was used in the P-12 environment, it is apparent that its presence in the P-12 world is increasing and is not likely to wane. It is also apparent that social media is being used by people of all ages. With this use has come great benefits; however, some challenges also need to be addressed.

This section has defined what social media is and has outlined a succinct history of it, with a focus on Facebook. The world will continue to be affected by this change and increase in communication. Schools, being a microcosm of society, will also be affected by this explosion of communication which has connected people in a way humankind has not before experienced.



**Social Media in Schools.** Students feel as much at home using social media as they do listening to their favorite music. While most school districts across the nation still block social media (Davis, 2010), an increasing number of more courageous schools are seeing the benefits of incorporating it. For example, Eric C. Sheninger, the principal at New Milford High School in New Jersey, uses an official school Facebook page, and he tweets and blogs with the students, staff, and parents at his school. He and many others studied in this research have gone from being skeptics about the presence of social media in schools (due to concerns about privacy and inappropriate behavior) to becoming strong advocates for its use, due to its amazing capability to engage students (Ferriter, Ramsden, & Sheninger, 2011).

Many schools dealing with budget cuts at a level not experienced in the history of public education are embracing these communication tools because, for the most part, they are free. In addition, though the use of social media was once looked upon as a fad for the very young, it appears to be here to stay. There is no time like the present to begin figuring out ways to use this new media appropriately so those in the education field will be ready when the social media generation starts bringing their children to kindergarten—and before site founders and advertisers figure out a way to start charging for all these free tools” (Carr, 2010, p. 35).

A study by the Washington-based *Pew Research Center’s Internet and American Life Project* released in 2010 found that 73 percent of Americans ages 12 to 17 use social-networking websites, up from 55 percent in 2006. This 18 percent jump in ten years is not expected to slow down (Anderson & Rainie, 2010). Defending this prediction, Steve Hargadon, the creator of the 42,000-member Classroom 2.0 network on Ning (the world’s largest platform for creating social websites), says “Social networking is not going to go away” (Davis, 2010, p. 16). He believes —“These [social network tools] are so powerful in terms of learning” (p. 18).

In Trussville, Alabama, the school district has completely opened up the filters. Instead of getting the message, “Access Denied,” its students are free to use YouTube videos (a popular video-sharing website that lets anyone upload videos for private or public viewing), and to participate in Internet chats with peers around the world or with award-winning authors. They are even allowed to have blogging sessions and do Web research using search engines as open as Google. This 4,100-student district near Birmingham is known for its technology and practices this belief by teaching its students 21<sup>st</sup>-century values as they provide instruction on digital citizenship and appropriate use of all digital media.

—Instead of blocking the many exit ramps and side routes on the information superhighway, they have decided that educating students and teachers on how to navigate the Internet’s vast resources responsibly, safe, and productively—and setting clear rules and expectations for doing so—is the best way to head off online collisions” (Manzo, 2009, p. 11). Many forward-thinking districts like Trussville exist in the United States, and it would behoove those who put up detour signs all around the information superhighway to learn from Trussville and others like them, or their students will certainly be left behind.

It follows that since the students are living in this social media-rich world, teachers will need to go there with them. Not only will teachers need to go where the students are, but these educators will also benefit by taking advantage of the considerable opportunities for collaboration that social media avail. Social media tools allow teachers to connect one-to-one and even one-to-many in such relevant ways that they may finally find professional development that will truly help them. Using new social media tools, like using any tool, requires some training, some exposure to various ways to use it, and some time to practice in order to develop a

high level of comfort and expertise. These learning opportunities and collaborative capabilities will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

As the use of social media in schools continues to increase, school leaders need to become well-versed on the use of social media in the school setting so that they are able to guide and encourage its use. They must understand the educational benefits of these learning tools, as well as recognize and appreciate their legal and ethical aspects. School leaders need to be cognizant of the overall Web 2.0 world and all that it offers and not get tied up in the minutia of how each tool works, since the social media world appears to truly function by Moore's Law. Moore's Law has changed a bit since Gordon E. Moore, the co-founder of Intel, first stated in an article that the "complexity of minimum cost semiconductor components had been doubling once a year, every year, since the first prototype microchip had been produced six years before" (Garreau, 2005, p. 49). By 2005, the contemporary version of Moore's Law had "come to be stated this way: The power of information technology will double every 18 months, for as far as the eye can see" (p. 49). Moore's Law makes it imperative for a leader in education to understand the overarching need to embrace technology use in a macro way, and to lead a staff in ways that make change and technology as comfortable and flexible as possible.

### **The Need for a Resource Guide**

**Students are Using Social Media.** This research was conducted to help school leaders facilitate the use of social media by their staff, and a key reason why staff must know how to navigate safely in the world of social media is because their students are already living in that world. In his blog (a Website that contains an online personal journal with comments, reflections, and often hyperlinks), Jonathon Martin shared an article entitled *11 Ways Schools Can Be Relevant, Compelling and Effective in the Coming Transformational Years* (2011). He

shares important ideas on how to keep brick-and-mortar schools more vital and viable. His article suggests the following guidelines as ways school leaders and teachers in schools must increasingly embrace technology and innovation:

1. Become more accountable by using the right kind of data: Schools of choice are here, and parents and their students, as stakeholders, are making their choices based on data and measures of accountability. Publicized data will need to include more than nationally normed test results or state assessment scores. Alumni tracking, climate, and student engagement surveys will need to be provided to education consumers (both parents and students) in ways that are authentic and attractive. Many districts are using dynamic and eye-catching digital portfolios to meet this goal.
2. Ensure safe, welcoming, connected, and caring school communities: Gone are the days when schools can look like warehouses for students. Gone are the days when students would continue to come to schools where they did not feel safe and engaged in their learning. The schools of the past existed as a monopoly of sorts, and today's schools are no longer able to force children to attend them when those same students have the options of connecting online or to home school. Martin refers to Daniel Pink's idea that successful schools in the coming years will be "blended high-tech/high-touch school models" (Pink, 2006, p. 51). These schools need to be learning communities where students feel valued and are treated with dignity. He then quotes David Brooks, author of *The Social Animal*: "One of a successful student's key skills in school is his ability to bond with teachers. We've spent a

generation trying to reorganize schools to make them better, but the truth is that people learn from the people they love” (Brooks in Martin, 2011).

3. Engage meaningfully: If students do not see a reason to go to school today to learn, they will not be going to school tomorrow. They have too many other options of where they can learn. Middle and upper-middle-class school leaders have lessons to learn from those who have been working diligently in inner-city schools to curb dropout rates. Many of these dropout reduction attempts have worked amazingly well. For example, CART: Center for Advanced Research and Technology, located in Fresno, California, focuses on developing engaging project-based learning into all they do, and has reduced its drop-out rates from 50 percent to 5 percent. Educators have much to learn from anti-dropout experts: make learning meaningful; make it project-based so students can make, fix, create, solve real problems, and they will keep coming back.
4. Affirm socializing: ~~We~~ might think that student time is best spent in class, focusing exclusively on school work, but if we don’t honor their deep and innately human need for social experiences, we will only drive them out of our schools to other options. I hate to say it, but if Facebook and other social media are an integral part of their social lives, forbidding it from their lives for six to ten hours a day only increase students’ motivation to redirect their education to venues which tolerate their social desires” (p. 1).
5. Welcome digital tools: Students see how almost all professionals now use digital tools (such as mobile devices and laptops) and social media in their everyday work. How disappointing it must be then to come to a school where these same tools and

options are disallowed. Students should be using tools in the school setting the same ways they will be required to do so in their work environment. This, again, will include all types of technological tools as well as social media. Schools of the future will have students who “learn by doing, vigorously, digitally” (Martin, 2011).

6. Open the networks: Tom Friedman, author of *The World is Flat*, agrees with President Barack Obama that nothing is more important to our society’s future than that our young people are able to be problem solvers in order to address societal challenges, to be innovators, to be creative enough to come up with needed solutions. The author of *Where Good Ideas Come From*, Steven Johnson, and the curator of Technology, Entertainment, and Design (TED), Chris Anderson, agree and argue passionately that these innovative minds will be cultivated most effectively by making certain that our students are networked digitally. When our students are digitally networked, they will be more easily able to stimulate each other’s ideas, to inform and motivate each other. Stifling and limiting the primary ways students share information (i.e. by watching videos posted on Facebook or YouTube) will not encourage their educational relevance and effectiveness. Opening the networks will increase the relevance and effectiveness of education.
7. Employ video: Referring to video on Facebook or YouTube, Chris Anderson, of TED, contends that watching video is almost archetypal in that it takes one back to campfire and storytelling. Our genes are ingrained to accept and appreciate this. Watching video can often help a student more than simply reading a text. Even more importantly, creating videos can encourage a student to learn more deeply. Crafting video helps students prepare for their future. Writing, speaking and digital video

communication must join together to be the ~~tr~~inity of communication essentials” (Martin, 2011).

8. Include gaming: The U.S. military, many corporations, and some medical practices use gaming. In *A Whole New Mind*, Daniel Pink (2006) writes, ~~F~~“For a generation of people, games have become a tool for solving problems as well as a vehicle for self-expression and self-exploration” (p. 192). He continues that the current generation has woven video games into their lives much as their predecessors did television. He writes, ~~B~~“For example, according to several surveys, the percentage of American college students who say they’ve played video games is 100” (p. 192). The schools that best figure out how to use gaming relevantly will have a huge advantage over those who refuse to consider the use of gaming in education.
9. Provide digitally adaptive skill development: Martin does not want computers to replace teachers, and he reminds the reader that ~~o~~“r teachers must become more important rather than less in the way they connect with and care for students” (p. 6). He argues that in order to compete effectively with online academies, teachers will need to integrate the best tools available into their classrooms. Digital tools enhance learning, while the teacher provides inspiration, coaching and counseling every day. Computer-adaptive testing helps a teacher assess a student’s learning needs quickly and facilitates needed differentiation. Martin also quotes Shelly Blake-Pollock, who wrote, ~~I~~“n ten years, the teacher who hasn’t yet figured out how to use tech to personalize learning will be the teacher out of a job” (Blake-Pollock, 2009, p. 1).
10. Use online, open-source textbooks: If students are to be lifelong learners, they will need to know how to use more than antiquated, paper-hogging textbooks. Online,

open-sourced textbooks will provide students with ever-changing, relevant information. Teachers will be able to “curate” their textbooks to suit their specific curricula needs and teaching styles, and, most importantly, students’ learning requirements. Districts will need to move from buying print textbooks to acquiring customizable digital resources.

11. Support our educators in becoming growth-mindset, networked, online learners and creators: If educators are to become teachers in this digital age, they will first need to make certain they are themselves learners in the digital age. Professional Learning Networks, or PLNS, are powerful tools to help all educators collaborate, share and network. No longer must a teacher be alone in a classroom filled with students, with only herself to depend upon to discover and incorporate the best practices. The same teacher who may have had to be a “silo” educator in the past may now be part of Facebook, Twitter, Ning, LinkedIn, or a number of other wonderful Web 2.0 tools will only make the ability to reach each student that much more possible. A teacher may not become a professional development expert, but he will be able to engage these tools from the comfort of a classroom, a home, or even an outdoor venue. The challenge for some, as they go through this transformation, may be that they find themselves on the outside of the group of the old-guard veterans, although this being on the outside will very likely be short lived. “For the majority of schools, however, choosing to refuse this agenda is choosing to become obsolete: neither relevant to the educational options selectors (both parents and students) will select, nor more effective in preparing students for our information age transformed society” (p. 8).



Schools are continuously challenged with meeting the changing educational goals of society. Whether they are set up as Thomas Jefferson suggested, to “preserve the newly created democracy,” teach all citizens to “participate in the democracy,” learn the basics, be a melting pot for socialization and assimilation, and to further prepare an elite group to “lead the country wisely in elected office,” or to make sure all students test at the proficient level in reading, math and science, schools need to be using whatever tools they can find to help students learn (Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2008, pp. 52-53). School leaders must be as prepared as possible to guide their staff members to do what is necessary help students learn. Doing what is necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will require that schools use more and more technology. School leaders must assist their staff by staying abreast of these things themselves, and a resource guide sharing information about how to manage the use of social media in schools will be useful.

In *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*, authors Christensen, Horn, and Johnson (2008) write a message to school leaders, both elected officials and administrators. He encourages them to introduce change more effectively by using the right tools. He says to school leaders, “As you face budget crises and difficulty finding teachers, don’t solve these problems by doing less in the existing system. Solve it by facilitating disruption” (p. 227). He specifically focuses on technology, saying, “Don’t place artificial limits on what students can take online or what teachers can build online either; if they need access to a class or want to create content and lessons, let them do what they need to do, what they want, and what works best for them” (p. 227). This focus on technology will most certainly require teachers to enter the social media world where many of their students spend time, and a resource guide can facilitate this move.

Christensen, Horn, and Johnson's words are echoed by additional experts in the field. Dr. Gerald Bailey, author of several articles and books about digital citizenship, stated on his questionnaire that "Censorship by the board of education and school policies make it really difficult to use social networks, and we are seeing exciting things in isolated pockets where their use is allowed" (G. Bailey, personal communication, February 23, 2011). Allowing the use of social networks will allow staff to help students learn by using all of these exciting things. Yet, the concerns which lead to the censorship must also be addressed and made known to school leaders.

If school leaders are going to take the instructional leader position, they themselves must know how far or how near these limits should be set. It is imperative that they are well educated enough on the appropriate use of social media to make decisions on how it should be used by themselves and with their students.

In a signed post on the ISTE Blog about what message blocking the Internet sends to students, Shelly Blake-Plock makes no apologies about comparing the gag order on the Internet in many schools with the Internet crackdown which occurred a few years ago in China when they attempted to thwart reactions to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Blake-Plock asks, "Whatever happened to the notion that teachers are capable of educating their students? Whatever happened to the notion that it was better for a student to learn about the dangers of life among peers in the safety of a classroom led by a trained professional teacher rather than in the darkness of a bedroom alone in the glow of the computer screen?" (Blake-Plock, 2009). He suggests that this filtering and blocking will only serve to make students feel they are not to be trusted, though they have done nothing to deserve this implication. It also sends the same message to the teachers. He finishes, "So long as we continue to block access to

the full range of tools available on the Internet, we will continue to do a disservice to our students and children. In the name of safety, we will produce a generation who views us with contempt. And that itself is in the disservice of democracy” (Blake-Plock, 2009). His words may seem to some an overstatement; however, much research affirms that educators are doing a disservice to their students and children by not allowing them to use the full range of tools the Internet provides.

**Teachers are Using Social Media.** Teachers are using these technologies more and more. In the February 2010 issue of *eSchool News*, Maya Prabhu presents findings from a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) survey released January 5, 2010. The survey results were compiled by Grunwald Associates, an education research group, and the survey, “Digitally Inclined,” was the first to include information collected from pre-K educators. The PBS has been conducting this educators’ media use survey annually since 2002. Indications from the 2010 survey include the following:

- 76 percent of P-12 educators said they used digital media in the classroom (up from 69 percent in 2008),
- 80 percent indicated they were frequent or regular users, while only 33 percent of the pre-K educators indicated they were frequent or regular users,
- P-12 teachers were accessing video online more, with 72 percent saying they streamed or downloaded content from the Internet (up from 65 percent in 2008), with only 29 percent of the pre-K educators indicating use,
- 25 percent of P-12 educators indicated that they belong to an online community created specifically for teachers as well as to social networking sites. Results were similar for pre-K teachers.

Rob Lippincott, senior vice president of education for PBS, wrote a response to the survey results, saying he believed these changes by teachers could lead to more engaging and collaborative learning environments, and he continued, “Other changes could include more effective instruction for students with different learning styles and abilities as well as more positive and flexible forums for collaboration and professional development, built around communities of interest and expertise rather than around geography alone” (Prabhu, February, 2010, p. 1).

The “digital divide,” the gap between those individuals who have technology and those who do not have it, exists on different levels. Computer ownership is only the starting point when identifying the digital divide which also includes a second-level digital divide. The second-level digital divide is caused by numerous factors: autonomy of the user; online capabilities; connectivity; computer support; and the age of the computer. Typically, one sees a person’s income as an influence in at least three of these factors; connectivity, computer support, and the age of the computer.

Don Knezek, ISTE’s chief executive, takes this a step further. He sees the “digital divide,” as a “learning divide” (Dessoiff, 2010, p. 1). Knezek says, “Kids don’t have the opportunity to learn, as well as earn,” if they do not have the needed digital skills (p. 1). In the past, students had the classroom teacher to serve as their “sole guide.” But now they will need to connect and interact with experts around the world using all the available digital tools. This keeps them engaged and helps them advance their learning.

School leaders must be prepared to use these technologies as much as the students and the staff. In the next section, numerous resources validate the need for school leaders to lead the way by embracing the use of social media by their students and staff.

**School Leaders are Using Social Media.** Getting school leaders to make time to become educated and comfortable with integrating social media in their schools may be challenging. The place to begin will be to have them engage in reflection, to look at the overarching reasons for integrating this, and then to make it as simple as possible for them to learn about how to do this safely. In the December/January 2009-10 edition of *Learning and Leading with Technology*, Lotta Larson, Teresa Miller, and Mike Ribble share *5 Considerations for Digital Age Leaders*. Their five considerations are aligned with National Education Technology Standards (NETS) for Administrators, as found in the ISTE.

1. Visionary leadership: Larson, Miller and Ribble (2009) point out that —proactive vision is crucial for lasting and effective technology integration” (p. 13). All of the leaders in a district, including administrators, instructional technology staff, and teacher leaders, need to have a common vision of where their technology plan is directed. Without this vision, the district will not be able to move forward. Superintendants, as well as school principals, must develop and support this vision. They must champion the exploration of effective social media use by their staff in order to benefit their students
2. Digital age learning culture: The authors explain the dramatic ways teaching and learning have changed over the past ten years. The role of the teacher has become one of being —able to connect to their students’ digital worlds to engage and motivate a new and very different type of learner” (p. 13). They mention a quotation by Mortimer Zuckerman, Editor in Chief of *U.S. News and World Report*, when he envisioned the teacher’s role as being an enhancer who facilitates students’ learning by helping them understand the information they receive electronically. The article’s

authors also ask school leaders to consider some difficult questions, acknowledging the tightrope those leaders attempt to walk in this new age of high-stakes testing: “Is it OK to block off significant amounts of time for test preparation at the expense of time to use digital tools?” And “How can a new, shared vision help us rethink what a typical classroom should look like?” (p. 14).

3. Systemic improvement: Digital age leaders at all levels must consider technology in their districts with a systems approach. They need to pay attention to how technology is being used and whether it is doing what is was intended to do, and continuously work to make sure its use is aligned with the vision the district set.
4. Excellence in professional practice: The goal of professional development should be to train the staff to “promote technology use not as playing with gadgets, but as accessing tools to make educators and learning more effective at motivating, engaging and preparing students for their futures” (p. 15). The planning of these professional-growth opportunities must fit seamlessly with the district’s vision. The authors also delve into practical ways districts, large and small, resource-rich or not, might offer practical, continuous support for their staffs. Some examples they offer include moving teachers through a tiered, skill-level system, or providing them useful incentives. (Teachers are given digital cameras to use if they agree to learn about using digital photography in their classroom.) They also offer an idea, which fits well with this research to “Use blogs, wikis, or course management systems, such as Moodle, to create and share courses or information with teachers” (p. 15). They encourage school leaders to be creative in ways to get teachers more time to practice

using the aforementioned ideas, and point out that the ways to provide professional development are as numerous and as necessary as is the creativity of school leaders.

5. Digital citizenship: References made to this in *5 Considerations for Digital Age Leaders* focus on the role of the school leader to initiate conversations with their faculties about the appropriate uses of technology. Handing out Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and requiring each staff member to sign a copy is not enough. School leaders must lead by example and should exemplify what ISTE is saying: ~~that~~ “all users in a district should understand the social, ethical, and legal issues and responsibilities related to technology” (p. 15). The authors reference the ISTE book, *Digital Citizenship in Schools* by Gerald Bailey and Mike Ribble, which identifies nine themes users may consider, helping them break down digital citizenship into understandable components. This book continues to be used extensively in the Maize School District in Maize, Kansas, with both students and staff, and the greatest benefit, according to feedback from students, and conversations with staff, has been that it gets people reflecting about their own uses of technology.

Larson, Miller and Ribble (2009) succinctly identify the need for digital age leadership by highlighting some important facts: ~~Technology~~ “Technology has added a new level of responsibility for school leaders. Many consider themselves unprepared or unqualified to identify and integrate technology in their own practice. It is important to move past any reservations and discomfort to prepare students for the futures they deserve” (p. 15). A school leader’s resource guide would be another tool to help digital-age leaders get past those reservations, and make them more comfortable getting their students what they are owed.

A large amount of research supports getting school leaders on board with technology integration, and with the use of social media as being part of that integration. In the August 2010 *eSchool News*, an article entitled *The Keys to Ed-Tech Success* was written with the premise that “Schools with one-to-one computing programs have fewer discipline problems, lower dropout rates, and higher rates of college attendance than schools with a higher ratio of students to computers, according to the results of a major new study” (Devaney, August 2010, p. 28). The major new study was prepared by Project RED (Revolutionizing Education), a national initiative that seeks to prove that, when done properly, investing in technology can increase student achievement and will lead to financial savings for schools and local governments. Devaney writes, “Leadership and vision are two essential components in technological implementation, the study found, and while all schools can benefit from technology, the study shows that “when principals receive specialized training . . . the benefits increase even more”” (p. 28).

Devaney’s study added something quite specific to this research. “Sixty-five percent of responding schools that use social media saw a drop in disciplinary action, versus 56 percent of schools not using social media” (p. 29). The author found that 52 percent of the schools saw a lowering of dropout rates, whereas a smaller number (37 percent) of schools that did not use social media saw a dropout rate decrease. Networked students feel like they belong to an environment where people listen to (or read) their ideas. Social media engages students, and engaged students are more likely to stay in schools.

Providing visionary leadership for staff, engaging learners, preparing students for the technological world in which they live, and even helping to lower dropout rates are just a few of the many reasons school leaders must embrace social media and its appropriate use by students, and staff members, as well as by themselves. This section exemplified the fact that a need for a



school leader's resource guide for the facilitation of social media in schools exists by showing how frequently students, staff and school leaders are using it. The review of literature also shows that the use of social media allows teachers to connect one-to-one and even one-to-many in ways that would impact professional development. The next section of this literature review describes the ways social media is being used in the P-12 educational system.

### **Legal Aspects of Social Media Use in P-12 Education**

The information shared in this section will cover legal issues, including issues such as privacy and freedom of expression. It will reference the numerous legal precedents which exist at the time of this literature review, through the fall of 2011. After discussing the legal issues regarding various types of social media, some promising practices, challenges, and digital citizenship will be covered. The last issue in the section will be the emergence of possible issues in the future use of social media in schools.

**Constitutional Issues and Legal Precedents: Privacy.** In discussing social media, two important areas of the *Constitution of the United States* must be explored. The first part addresses the issue of privacy in using social media in schools; in the second part, the issue of freedom of speech and expression will be the topic. Frequently these two protections are at odds with the schools' expectations of how all staff and students should share information when using social media.

An expectation of privacy, for most Americans, is as much part of being an American as is the right to vote or to own property. The explosion of technology has provided a wonderful opportunity, as well as a bit of a conundrum. Most users feel relatively comfortable using technology, yet they get a bit confused about how far they should go. The boundaries of use are

not always straightforward, and the areas of individual understanding are not all black or white. Examples in the following sections will help illustrate this.

An example of a privacy issue where it should have been either black or white was one tragic situation involving Tyler Clementi, a freshman student at Rutgers University. Tyler committed suicide in 2009 days after videos of his private sex acts were made public online, without his permission, by a fellow student in an online broadcast. The university indicated that its policy includes a regulation against recording someone on campus “where there is an expectation of privacy with respect to nudity and/or sexual activity” (Carter, 2009, p. 1). A policy was not enough. The goal for this research is to equip those in leadership positions with information that will make them ready and willing to train school staff in digital media areas. Too often the management of technology lags behind the use of it. More information in ways to train management in this area needs to be researched, validated, and disseminated.

The director of policy and advocacy at the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, Paul Stephens, said the Rutgers situation shows that some college students still need basic lessons on online conduct, though the actions against Clementi do appear to be an obvious privacy violation. “Even one tweet or one Facebook post leaves a digital footprint forever,” he said. “There are many consequences to what you do online . . . and we have a generation that grew up with this technology, and to a large extent, they have not considered what the consequences down the road could be for what they say right now” (Carter, 2009, p. 2).

Speaking of having a digital footprint forever, Dutch ingenuity seems to have found a solution to that problem. There is something called a Web 2.0 Suicide Machine that can be found at [www.SuicideMachine.org](http://www.SuicideMachine.org). This creation works simply and was created by Gordon Savicic and Walter Langelaar, who met while attending art school in the Netherlands. After

visiting the website, one simply selects the network to depart from, enters a name and password. The Suicide Machine will vaporize all contacts, friends, tweets, and other footprints, one by one. It was introduced in December of 2009, but it was only online for three weeks before receiving its initial “cease-and-desist” letter from Facebook. The social media giant did not appreciate the Suicide Machine’s taking over Facebook’s servers and removing an accumulation of information, information Facebook indicated that it owned, but they had no legal recourse to stop them (Dobrow, 2010).

Ironically many of the advancements in technology have led to an increase in surveillance. Though many feel the use of technology helps them to find out any information they want access anytime and anywhere, they must also be aware that other people may be finding out more about them than they might desire. Similarly, the concept of “digital divide” as something associated with one’s socioeconomic status also relates to privacy in that a person’s class influences how much privacy he might enjoy. Powerful groups “secure spaces of comparative privacy for themselves, while leaving the poor ever more exposed to scrutiny” (Lyon, 2006, p. 30). David Lyon discusses these “hierarchies of visibility” in his book *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*. Michel Foucault’s work in surveillance in relation to technology and education can best be illustrated using the exemplar of the Panopticon. The Panopticon was a type of prison building designed in 1785 by Jeremy Bentham, an English philosopher and social theorist. This design concept was created to easily allow an observer to observe (-opticon) all (pan-) prisoners without those prisoners being able to know they were being watched. Foucault used the Panopticon as a way to describe disciplinary power “as circulating rather than being possessed, productive and not necessarily repressive, existing in action, functioning at the level of the body, often operating through technologies of

the self” (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998, p. 233). The world of social media could very well be described as a Panopticon of use in that potentially all may be observed in their use of it, and therefore users of social media should use it purposefully and carefully.

It is important to note that Michel Foucault’s work in surveillance had positive elements relating to education. Foucault indicated: “A relation of surveillance, defined and regulated is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency” (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998, p. 176). He defends some of the surveillance practices used in education, such as getting to know the name of students and other skills that help teachers keep students on task. This also relates to the use of social media since this type of medium lends itself to the opening of communication and potential relationship-building with each student.

In a case study of eight schools in the United Kingdom, Hope (2005) shares how Internet surveillance in schools includes a variety of methods to control student activity through physical observation as well as limited use of computer use surveillance programs. The author, Andrew Hope, references Bentham’s panopticon style prison design, and the way it makes the prisoner the object of information, and not the subject of communication. He goes on to say how this helps control the behavior of the prisoner. He then makes the transition into how this has application to how schools are designed around the influence of the teacher. “A key element of panopticism is that those on the periphery are never totally sure if they are being observed at any one particular moment” (p. 361). This sounds very similar to the world of social media and the need to treat it appropriately.

A person’s socioeconomic status can secure him more privacy. Data show that technology use and its advancement may vary due to one’s socioeconomic class, where one was

born, her race, and even her gender. Typical educators, most being of similar socioeconomic status, will not enjoy any extra privacy. In fact, teachers enjoy less privacy than many other occupations experience due to the nature of what they do.

In his article, *Why No One Cares About Privacy Anymore*, author Declan McCullagh (2010) writes, “Norms are changing with confidentiality giving way to openness” (p. 2). The article is primarily about Google’s co-founder, Sergey Brin, and the company’s social network, Google Buzz. The launching of Google Buzz in 2010 met some snags, and Google ended up being compelled by the Federal Trade Commission to reprogram Buzz in response to a class-action lawsuit. However, apparently only a very few of the Google Buzz users were concerned with the lack of privacy protections inherent in this new social medium. “Internet users have grown accustomed to informational exhibitionism” (p. 2). Of all people with an online profile, nearly 40 percent have actually taken the extra steps necessary to disable privacy settings so anyone may view the content. Estimates are likely higher than 40 percent today (Pew Research, 2010).

Interestingly, in the same article by McCullagh (2010), Richard Posner, a federal judge wrote, “I think privacy is greatly overrated because privacy basically means concealment. People conceal things in order to fool other people about them. They want to appear healthier than they are, smarter, more honest, and so forth” (p. 3). Additional specific references also suggest less privacy can actually lead to a more honest society. Less privacy using technology helps markets function more efficiently, making it easy to identify and provide an appropriate product to the person who can use it at the time at which it can be used. This may make advertising more relevant, more fitting.

Hiding one's identity, being private, can actually lead to more vitriol and less civil discourse. More thoughtful discussions will likely occur when the identities of those doing the discussing are made known. Without being identified, a person might be more willing to do things one's conscience would otherwise restrict. This becomes apparent when one views news stories or blogs which encourage readers to keep their identities private as they respond.

McCullagh also referenced Irwin Altman, a psychology professor emeritus at the University of Utah, who created a theory of privacy which predated the creation of Facebook and its relatives. Altman posited, "If one can choose how much or how little to divulge about oneself to another voluntarily, privacy is maintained" (p. 4). In this statement he might be said to have given his blessing to social media users a generation later.

These same contemporary social media users are now humorously referred to as "Generation Xhibitionists" and have grown up constantly adjusting to living in a world of porn spam and Viagra ads. A generation earlier, their counterparts were embarrassed and even somewhat confused when viewing a simple feminine hygiene advertisement on television. A 2008 Harris Interactive Poll/CTIA (International Association for the Wireless Telecommunications Industry) indicates of more than 2,000 American teens, youth are rarely concerned about privacy. Of those surveyed, only 41 percent reported being concerned about privacy, while 59 percent were comfortable with providing private information to marketers. Interestingly, a Harris poll done in 1998, the year Google was introduced, found that 80 percent of people were anxious about shopping online due to concerns about privacy. In just one decade, concern about privacy when using online communication has dramatically decreased, and the facts indicate that today's youth are comfortable with sharing their information with the masses (Harris, 2008).

Privacy was more of an expectation with Facebook when it was created, with users having to approve friends, implying a more intimate relationship, but Twitter uses the simple concept of a “follower.” Twitter chose this option to increase openness, and it appears to have been a successful choice. Twitter’s user numbers grew tenfold in 2009, while Facebook’s membership doubled, and while it would be nearly impossible for Facebook to grow at the same swift rate as Twitter since it already has such a large audience, this still helps illustrate how Twitter’s intentional choice to be more open and simple has worked quite well for it (McCullagh, 2010).

Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook’s CEO, spoke at a technology conference in January of 2010, sharing with the audience that the present users of the Internet as a whole do not care as much about privacy. He said that in the seven years since he started Facebook, “people have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people—and that social norm is just something that has evolved over time” (McCullagh, 2010, p. 6). When Facebook moved in December 2009 to force users to reveal more, there was a slight backlash with a protest group entitled “Facebook! Fix the Privacy Settings.” However, this protest group attracted only 3,400 members, which was less than one-thousandth of 1 percent of Facebook’s 350 million users at that time. To illustrate just how inconsequential this number of members appears, close to 1 million members were attracted to become members of a Facebook group of people who like to flip their pillows over to the cold side (Retrieved from Facebook on July 31, 2011). Zuckerberg appears to have a reasonable understanding of where his users’ concerns about privacy lie.

In regard to students, the law has addressed their privacy at the federal level since 1974, when the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, was put into effect. JoAnn

Marx-Talarczyk has provided a succinct list entitled *Five Things Teachers Should Know about Student Privacy*, and though it does not go into great detail about information shared using social media, the information does apply in that area as well (Marx-Talarczyk, 2011).

Marx-Talarczyk first mentions the official definitions a teacher should recognize in relation to FERPA, such as directory information, personally identifiable information, disclosure, and educational records. Marx-Talarczyk suggests that disclosure of information involves three basic categories: disclosure to parents and students, disclosure to third parties with the consent of the parent, and disclosure to third parties without any consent given. Under FERPA it is legal to share education records with students who are 18 years or older, or to the parents of younger students. When a request is made, the school district is to provide the records before 45 calendar days have passed.

If records are to be shared with a third party, the parent or adult pupil must have given consent in writing, and the consent must indicate to whom the information is to be given, and the purpose for which it is given. Allowable disclosure to a third party without the consent of the parent or adult student includes sending records to other schools or educational institutions, to the juvenile justice system, in response to lawsuits or subpoenas, and in the case of safety and health emergencies.

The third thing Marx-Talarczyk suggests teachers should know about privacy is that parents not only have the right to request education records, they also may request that amendments be made to them. They also have a right to file a complaint if the request for amendments is not honored. This complaint would then be heard by a third party, and that third party would decide if the requested amendment was suitable.



Fourth, school districts are required by FERPA to notify parents of their FERPA rights annually. Included in these notifications should be exactly what the rights are, how to exercise these rights, and who is considered to be a school official. The notification should be made in the primary language of the parents and accessible to those who are disabled.

Finally, FERPA requires that schools must keep accurate records of all parties receiving education records, the stated interest of those same parties, and the names of any additional parties receiving those records. Information regarding FERPA applies not only to school officials, but also to all employees in an educational setting. It is important that all those who use technology to communicate about students and their records are aware of the FERPA requirements concerning those communications.

For educators themselves, the concept of privacy is not absolute. Though teachers have some privacy rights, the courts have not consistently defended them. Something the courts have agreed upon is that educators do indeed have the right to private lives, but additionally they also have duty to keep it private. “If school employees value their privacy and their positions as educators, allowing their private lives to become public is a choice that may bear consequences” (Dunklee & Shoop, 2006, p. 118). A school leader’s resource guide on facilitating social media use in schools would require an understanding of this by all teachers. If teachers want their private lives to be respected, they need to keep them private and not post information they want to stay confidential onto any type of social media.

However, Dunklee and Shoop (2006) also reference the need for there to be a connection or a *nexus* between what the teacher’s private acts are and that person’s actual employment in the school setting. “If a nexus cannot be shown—that is, that something in the educator’s private life has reduced the educator’s ability to maintain discipline, present curriculum, or in some other

way, perform his or her professional duties—then actions in the educator’s private life may not be usable in a disciplinary or termination proceeding” (p. 118).

Educators are held in esteem by many in society and tend accordingly to have higher expectations placed on them, and rightfully so. However, the courts have established that idle conjecture should be considered an encroachment on the employee’s private life. —Although a school board can inquire into the character, integrity, and personal life of its employees, reprimands or dismissals must be based on supported facts that are neither arbitrary nor capricious” (Dunklee & Shoop, 2006, p. 118).

**Constitutional Issues and Legal Precedents: Freedom of Speech.** Differences in the expectations of privacy for the staff versus the students are based primarily on the fact that members of the staff are of the age of majority. Differences may also be based on the reality of the teachers being viewed as role models for students.

Before launching into the various ways staff members have actually violated good sense and the laws concerning the use of social media, it is important to look first at the general guidelines used in addressing employee misconduct. Teachers are contracted employees and have a protected interest in maintaining that employment after they are hired. In order to end that employment relationship, there needs to be —good” or —just” cause for termination. This cause becomes even more complex when the misconduct occurs off campus or is not necessarily school related.

Educators at times find themselves in situations where conflict is perceived between their personal lives and professional responsibilities. Two major themes become apparent when considering how an educator’s personal life and professional responsibilities are connected. This connection may be in considering the teacher as a role model, or it may be in looking for a more

literal connection, a nexus, between the educator's actions and the impact of those actions on the students.

The role model expectation of educators came first. Dewey's writing in 1909 regarding teachers stated "their actions, words, and so on carry a moral significance in themselves . . . teachers act as moral agents all the time, unconsciously" (Davison, Strobe & Uerling, 2003, p. 5). More recently, Justice Lewis Powell wrote in *Ambach v. Norwick, 1979*, "A teacher serves as a role model for his students, exerting a subtle but important influence over their perceptions and values."

This case is further evaluated in its relation to a teacher's role in the education of his students in *Constitution and Curriculum* written by James Anthony Whitson in 1991. In a section on socialization in schools, he quotes Justice Powell: "We have recognized [the public schools] as the primary vehicle for transmitting the values on which our society rests. And these historic perceptions of the public schools as inculcating fundamental values necessary to the maintenance of a democratic political system have been confirmed by the observations of social scientists" (pp. 74-75).

Teachers are considered to be role models and, therefore, may actually be terminated for misconduct that is not seen as specifically performance related. In most other occupations, what individuals do in their private time or personal lives is not typically considered something that can be scrutinized by their employers. However, due to this precedent and foundational belief, teachers are "held to a standard of personal conduct which does not permit the commission of immoral or criminal acts because of the harmful impression made on the students" (*Board of Education of Hopkins County v. Woods, 1986*). As one author in the article *The Personal Lives and Professional Responsibilities of P-12 Educators: Off-duty Conduct as Grounds for Adverse*

*Employment Actions* states, “Parents demand the teacher to be a better role model of behavior and conduct for their children than they are themselves” (Davison et al., 2003, p. 1).

The second, or nexus, theory was adopted and applied in the California Supreme Court case of *Morrison v. State Board of Education, 1968*. That decision “listed a set of factors to consider when establishing a rational nexus between a teacher’s off-duty conduct and his job.” Factors listed range from the likelihood that the conduct may adversely affect students or fellow teachers, to the degree of adversity anticipated, the likelihood of the recurrence of the questioned conduct, or the “chilling effect upon the constitutional rights of the teacher involved or other teachers” (Davison et al., 2003, p. 1).

The resource guide must address this important list of factors. All building and district-level administrators must know what can be done when an educator does as the article says, “a wild and crazy thing” (Davison et al., 2003, p. 2). More importantly, this ought not to be about what can be done but what *should* be done. The reality is that the outcomes of these types of cases may vary from state to state, and this makes it that much more important for an administrator to be cognizant of the legal rights of all of the district’s employees. The balance of the outcome must be one that protects the rights of teachers while ensuring that the school’s learning environment is not disrupted.

The following list was shared by Davison, Strobe and Uerling in their article *The Personal Lives and Professional Responsibilities of P-12 Educators*, and it is a list that will be included in the school leader’s resource guide (2003):

**Off-Duty Conduct as Grounds for Adverse Employment Actions:**

1. The likelihood that conduct may have adversely affected students or fellow teachers;
2. The degree of such adversity anticipated;

3. The proximity or remoteness in time of the conduct;
4. The type of teaching certificate held by the party involved;
5. The extenuating or aggravating circumstances, if any, surrounding the conduct;
6. The praiseworthiness or blameworthiness of the motives resulting in the conduct;
7. The likelihood of the recurrence of the questioned conduct;
8. The extent to which disciplinary action may inflict an adverse impact or chilling effect upon the constitutional rights of the teacher involved or other teachers (p. 4).

Occasionally a case will indicate that a teacher was terminated for immorality.

Challenges to terminations have been based on the issue of “immorality” being a term that is unconstitutionally vague. The courts have consistently discarded the argument of vagueness as long as the suspected misbehavior can be tied to a teacher’s suitability to teach. School districts must always ensure that before they suspend, terminate, or nonrenew an employee, the rationale for taking such action is permitted by district policy or state statute. In most states, tenured teachers may only be removed from employment for “cause,” and “cause” typically includes unprofessional or immoral conduct.

Inappropriate online behavior or offensive teacher blogs, tweets, posts, or messages might be argued as constituting immoral behavior. In Illinois, if a school official determines that online, off-duty conduct was immoral, the official must then decide whether the conduct is considered “remediable” or “irremediable.” The teacher’s conduct would be considered “irremediable” when: (1) the conduct caused significant damage to students, faculty, or the school; and (2) the teacher would not have corrected his or her conduct, even if the teacher had been issued a written warning and afforded a period of time for remediation. “Remediable” conduct constitutes misconduct in the ordinary course of duties which, if advised of, could

ordinarily be remedied. Irremediable conduct is subject to termination, while remediable conduct is subject to discipline short of termination (*Ahmad v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago*, 2006). Immoral conduct is considered irremediable in most states, and depending on the severity of the conduct, it can lead to discipline up to and including termination. –School officials in these cases should consider the dissemination of the online material and the residual effect the posting or image has had on the student body and the community. Specifically, school officials should determine if the misconduct has a significant connection to the teacher’s professional responsibilities” (Todd, DiJohn & Aldridge, 2008, p. 2).

How do school officials decide if off-duty, online conduct shows a considerable connection to the teacher’s responsibility as an educator? It must be determined whether that same off-duty, online conduct is irremediable per se and whether it results in sufficient grounds for teacher discipline. Some types of conduct, such as driving under the influence, possession of a controlled substance, and assault and battery charges have been considered irremediable conduct even without a formal conviction. So it stands also that the illegal misuse of drugs or alcohol or any other criminal behavior documented on a social media site would likely be considered irremediable conduct leading to a district’s determination to discipline or terminate a teacher’s contract.

The previously mentioned behaviors are more severe than some types of general misuse of digital media potentially conducted by a teacher. It is in these less-than-obvious behaviors that there would have to be a nexus analysis to determine whether the off-duty misconduct actually negatively and significantly affected the teacher’s ability to perform his or her job. It is left to the school district’s discretion to decide whether a teacher is able to be effective and serve as a role model for students.

One situation where a teacher's online behavior affects her ability to perform, and one that justifies discipline and termination, is the giving out of confidential student information in a blog. Many potential issues are at stake in these types of situations, including the potential FERPA violations. The guide created in this research definitely will need to help school leaders inform staff of the potential consequences for this type of conduct.

School boards are not empowered to take adverse action on an employee's contract simply due to the board's subjective annoyance regarding the employee's personal or private conduct. They cannot arbitrarily nonrenew a teacher due to reasons such as obesity or failure to attend church. The board must actually establish —a sufficient nexus between such improper conduct and the board's legitimate interest in protecting the school community from harm" (*Lile v. Hancock Place School District*, 1985).

Negotiated agreements must be in compliance with board of education policy and state statutes. As an example, one negotiated agreement discusses the reasons a teacher may be disciplined, in Section C., "Actions Taken Against Teachers" as follows:

No teacher will be disciplined, reprimanded, reduced in rank of compensation, suspended, discontinued in employment or deprived of any professional advantage without just cause. Examples of just cause could include: conviction of a felony; unauthorized conversion of the district property for personal or non-district purposes; substantial or persistent violation of BOE policies, rules, or regulations; persistent or willful insubordination; incompetence; conduct which results in a professional educator's inability to teach effectively in a classroom; and other causes which are not arbitrary, irrational, unreasonable or irrelevant to the Board of Education's task of building and

maintaining an efficient school system (Unified School District 266, Maize, Kansas, Negotiated Agreement, 2010).

In order to establish a nexus, courts have indicated that the conduct must have involved a student or a school-aged individual; the act itself must have been broadly publicized; the event must have taken place in public, thereby removing the actor's right to privacy; or the conduct must have been the product of a bigger, irreversible predicament or situation (Hooker, 1995).

Another important matter to keep in mind is that due process guarantees apply, and teachers are entitled to identical due process protection regardless of whether the reason for discipline occurred on campus. The schoolhouse gate, in essence, does not exist when it comes to the behaviors of teachers and their rights to due process.

**Relevant Court Cases: Facebook and My Space.** Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace, allow individuals to: (a) create a public or semi-public profile or web-page type structure within a bounded system; (b) articulate and maintain a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and (c) view their list of connections and connections made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). As of 2011, Facebook was the sixth most-trafficked Internet site in the United States, with 2.6 billion user minutes spent on Facebook daily throughout the world. Going into 2012, Facebook had more than 800 million active users, with more than 250 million photographs uploaded daily. Facebook's growth appears to redefine Moore's Law. Though MySpace gained hold earlier, it has been surpassed by Facebook. MySpace does cater to a younger crowd (under 18 years of age), with more than 100 million members enrolled by 2007 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Regarding staff use of social media, one can easily find numerous examples of teachers using Facebook and My Space inappropriately. It seems a month cannot go by without one



hearing about another ill-fated choice by a staff member to use one of these popular social media in a way that leaves one wondering, “Did these educators give their actions any thought at all?” For instance, a North Carolina teacher was dismissed for unprofessional conduct based on Facebook posting. Her postings included statements such as, “I am teaching in the most ghetto school in Charlotte,” and she listed one of her hobbies as “drinking” (Helms, 2008, p. 1).

In the case of *Snyder v. Millersville, 2008* it is revealed that this issue also pertains to pre-service teachers. Millersville University decided not to award Stacy Snyder her teaching degree, based in part on a picture she posted to her MySpace page showing her doing what appeared to be consuming alcohol and celebrating in a pirate hat. Snyder countered by suing the university, claiming they had violated her constitutional rights. She alleged that she had been denied her degree for posting something to her MySpace page, which she believed was her First Amendment free speech right. In this case, Snyder had attended an orientation session where she was warned not to make inappropriate comments on social network sites. She was given specific instructions which she then chose not to follow. Her inappropriate social media use resulted in the university denying her a degree. The university did a thorough job of documenting why her degree was not granted, proving that it was due to poor job performance, and not simply to comments made on social network sites. The resource guide includes information regarding how important it is to provide proper training to employees and to make certain it is documented.

In October 2010, a 54-year-old teacher submitted her resignation for what she called a “stupid mistake” (Knight, October 5, 2010). She indicated that she thought her comments were private and that they were only accessible to her close, private circle of friends on Facebook, but she was mistaken. She lost her high school teaching job in Massachusetts after parents complained about comments about their children she shared on Facebook. She referred to

students as “germ bags” and claimed she had been sick for months because of them. She also went on to say her students’ parents were “snobby” and “arrogant” and that she was “so not looking forward to another year” at school (Knight, October 5, 2010). She will not have another year at that school.

Claire Knight, the newspaper reporter for the preceding story, had to wait only five days to publish another article, *Look Who’s Fired Now*, about a Georgia school bus driver who lost her job for “humiliating him (the superintendent) and the district” with disparaging comments about the district’s plan to install artificial turf. She was fired for “lack of professionalism” (Knight, October 15, 2010).

Yet another recent teacher suspension occurred in early April 2011 in New Jersey. The Paterson School District suspended a first-grade teacher following complaints from parents that the teacher posted negative remarks about her students on her Facebook page. Theodore Best, the Board of Education president, told the newspaper that the teacher was suspended “because the incident created serious problems at the school that impeded the functioning of the building. You can’t simply fire someone for what they have on a Facebook page, but if that spills over and affects the classroom, then you can take action” (*Huffington Post*, April 20, 2011).

In 2007, John Bush, a middle-school teacher in Florida, was fired after his superintendent discovered “inappropriate material” on Bush’s personal MySpace website. The school district pointed out that, while the content was not pornographic, they determined that the webpage contained personal information about Bush that parents would not want their children to know about their teacher. The school district did not restrict teachers from having personal web pages, but it did inform all district staff not to post inappropriate material on the Internet. The

vagueness of this statement indicates that additional discussion and policies need to be considered (Simpson, 2008).

In *Spanierman v. Hughes, 2008*, after viewing several students' MySpace pages, at their request, a non-tenured high school English teacher opened a MySpace account and created several profiles that he used to communicate with students. His posts contained inappropriate content, such as pictures of naked men, and other unsuitable comments. He was subsequently placed on administrative leave and was non-renewed. In upholding his non-renewal, the Connecticut State Court held that, in part, a teacher's interest in the renewal of his teaching contract was not a protected-property interest under the due-process clause. The teacher had failed to demonstrate causation between protected speech and adverse employment action, as required on a First Amendment retaliation claim. There was no evidence that the Internet networking site purported to speak out on matters of public concern, as required to support a First Amendment freedom-of-expression-association claim. The teacher had failed to demonstrate causation between protected association and adverse employment action, as required on a First Amendment retaliation claim. Additionally, the content of the profiles did not address matters of public concern but were personal conversations or creative writing. The school could expect a teacher to maintain a professional, respectful relationship with students. Consequently, when this English teacher was using MySpace, he was not acting pursuant to his responsibilities as a teacher; therefore, his non-renewal was upheld (*Spanierman v. Hughes, 2008*).

These expectations for proper Facebook use pertain to administrators as well as to teachers and bus drivers. One new superintendent's tenure was short-lived after he chose to post a Facebook message that he had counseled an administrator to either retire or face termination.

And then he made an additional bad choice by ending his post with a smiley face emoticon. (An emoticon is a symbolic picture using keyboard characters.) His almost-new contract was terminated due to violations of the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for School Administrators and a Code for Educators. The Board of Education Chairwoman wrote, “Your actions, among other things, were unethical and a breach of privacy and could result in liability to the Board and the Town of Windsor Locks” (Beals, 2010, p. 1).

**Relevant Court Cases: Blogging and Websites.** Web logs, blogs, or online journals are attractive to many; as of 2011 there were approximately 150 million blogs, with 175 new blogs being created daily that were followed by more than 350 million blog readers (Rasmussen, 2011). A high rate of anonymity is made available to those who create blogs and to those who post on them. Perhaps this anonymity is a contributing reason for their high use: 77 percent of all Internet users are “bloggers” (Rasmussen, 2011).

Blogs are utilized by teachers for various reasons. Some educators use blogs as a way to connect with students, colleagues, administrators and parents in a thoughtful educational discussion. Sadly, some have used their blogs as a place to go on a tirade about students, colleagues, administrators and parents. Many other educators use blogs and other social media sites as places to interact with others on topics of mutual interest that are totally unrelated to anything connected to their teaching careers.

As mentioned in the discussion of freedom of speech, teachers do have some rights to express themselves using social media; however, unlike those working in the private sector, teachers are seen as role models for the children they have been entrusted to educate. Parents and guardians trust educators with the responsibility of imparting societal values and good citizenship qualities. The school district does have the ability and authority to discipline a

teacher to some degree for online conduct, whether on- or off-duty depending on: (1) whether the teacher has tenure; (2) the type of offending behavior, which may be defined by statute; (3) the correlation, or nexus, between the conduct and job performance; (4) the conditions and terms of the collective bargaining agreement; and (5) First Amendment constitutional considerations. Non-tenured, or probationary, teachers are generally “at-will” employees and are not protected by statute or collective agreement. Therefore, school districts have more flexibility in terminating or disciplining probationary teachers for online, off-duty transgressions (Todd et al., 2008).

Issues with blogs, like any other social media, include defamation, harassment, economic damage or damage to the reputation of the employer, and disclosure of confidential information, including student information and school district information. The law offers no special protection for blogging, any more than it offers it protection for other social media. In the issue of public-employee speech, the foundation question exists: Is it part of the employees’ duties? Their speech is not protected when they make statements pursuant to their official duties. When they do this, they are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the *Constitution of the United States* does not insulate their communications from employer discipline (*Garcetti v. Ceballos*, 2006).

In the case of *Richerson v. Beckon*, 2008, a curriculum director was removed from her position and demoted to her prior teaching position because of a statement she shared on her blog. She was reprimanded for commenting on her replacement and, thereby, violating the confidentiality expected of a member of an employee interview team. She then verbally attacked the teachers’ chief negotiator. In the end, her speech was seen as a matter protected due to its

being a public concern, but her personal attacks on specific individuals were the reason for her discipline (*Richerson v. Beckon*, 2008).

In yet another case, one at the university level, an employee was discharged for “egregious misconduct,” including creating and distributing information at his workplace about his personal website that complained about the low wages the university paid some employees. He also accessed and worked on the website at the workplace. His attempts to be reinstated failed (*Mammone v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 2006).

Another issue that arises in this area is whether the communication is a matter of public concern. The balancing of interests exists between this and the *Pickering* factors, which were a result of the case of *Pickering v. BOE of Township High School District 205*, 1968. In that case, the Supreme Court held that, absent proof of false statements knowingly or recklessly made, the teachers’ exercise of their right to speak out on issues of public concern cannot be used as the basis for dismissal from public employment. This balancing test was further clarified in *Connick v. Myers*, 1983. The Connick-Pickering test indicates that “a teacher may establish that his or her speech is constitutionally protected if: (1) the teacher spoke as a citizen on matter of public concern; and (2) the teacher’s interest as a citizen in commenting upon matters of public concern outweighs the interest of the school district in promoting the efficiency of its public services” (Todd et al., 2008, p. 2).

In a related case, *Nickolas v. Fletcher*, 2008, in Kentucky, the court denied an employee’s injunction in a case challenging the state’s decision to disallow state employees from accessing blogs from state-owned computers. The employee, Nickolas, was a “blogger” whose personal website focused on Kentucky political affairs and was critical of the Fletcher administration. As a result of the disputed state policy, state employees could no longer access Nickolas’ website

and other websites from state-owned computers. Nickolas alleged that the Kentucky's policy infringed upon his constitutional rights under the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause. The state of Kentucky allows employees to access the Internet for work-related reasons and for limited personal uses as long as it never interferes with the employees' official duties. This case resulted in a policy change by the state after a survey indicated personal use was leading to a decrease in employee efficiency. This decision could very well apply to other state employees, including public educators.

The world of blogging has, like many other areas in technology, led to the creation of a new word: —dooced.” This word, the common jargon for losing one's job because of the contents of one's blog, is the accidental creation of Heather Armstrong of Los Angeles, who in 2001, posted satirical accounts of her workplace and colleagues on her blog, [www.dooce.com](http://www.dooce.com). In 2002 she was fired for doing this. Armstrong writes, —I started this website in February of 2001. A year later I was fired from my job for this website because I had written stories that included people in my workplace. My advice to you is BE YE NOT SO STUPID” (Armstrong, 2011).

As late as 2011, discipline for online blogging, done off duty, has not led to significant litigation. However, there are two types of such cases in which the Supreme Court appears to limit the employer's right to restrict employees' First Amendment free speech. The first type —involves instances where a public employee speaks out about the functioning of the branch of government for which he or she works, a matter on which he or she is uniquely qualified to comment by virtue of their job status,” and the second type —involves government regulation of statements that are unrelated to the employee's job” (*Roberts v. Ward*, 2006). Again, this is something for both school staff and school leaders to watch since they are public employees.

In the present technological climate the above-mentioned cases are definitely not unique. The Employment Law Alliance surveyed more than 1,000 American employees in 2006 and discovered that nearly 5 percent maintained personal blogs. Of that group, 16 percent admitted to posting critical remarks about their co-workers, supervisors, employers, or customers. A blog-tracking website, technocrat.com, listed nearly 850 blogs created by teachers in 2006, many of which got thousands of hits every week. Shalanda Ballard, an employment defense attorney who has practiced in all areas of employment litigation, stated in her article (2009), *Social Networking Can Get You Fired*, how a recent survey discovered that 17 percent of large employers have disciplined employees for social networking activities and 8 percent of large employers have terminated employees for social networking activities. Ballard indicates her belief that these numbers will likely increase in the future, given the growth of social network use by employees. She finishes her article with the careful warning, “You should continue to network on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter, but be careful because your social networking activities can result in discipline, up to and including your termination” (p. 3).

In summary, if the speech is not about a matter of public concern, the speech is typically unprotected, and discipline may be imposed. When the speech relates to matters of public concern and then results in no potential disruption to the school environment or the teacher’s ability to perform his or her duties, the speech is typically protected. However, in situations where the speech concerns a public matter, but is possibly disruptive to the school environment or the teacher’s ability to perform his or her duties, then that speech is not protected, and discipline is allowed to be imposed (Todd et al., 2008).



### **Relevant Court Cases: Twitter, Instant or Text Messaging, and Sexting**

Twitter is one of the fastest-growing social networks. It is also considered to be a communication mode known as a micro-blog or super-texting. To “twitter” is to communicate through exchange of 140-character messages. As of January 2010 there were 6 million users, 225 million “tweets” per day, and recent studies indicate that 5 percent of tweeters are responsible for 95 percent of tweets (Rasmussen, 2011). After close to six years, Twitter has grown to include more than 200 million users. The following statistics describing Twitter illustrate the explosive growth of this social medium (as of March, 2011).

1. Twitter reached 1 billion tweets in three years, two months, and one day. Now Twitter users send 1 billion tweets per week.
2. One year ago, users sent an average of 50 million tweets per day. Today, that average is 140 million. And the number is growing.
3. The average number of accounts created per day is 460,000.
4. There has been a 182 percent increase in Twitter mobile users in 2011 as compared to 2010.
5. Twitter has grown from eight employees in January 2008 to 400 employees as of March, 2011 (TNW: Twitter: Part of the Next Web Family, March, 2011).

This will definitely be a type of social media to watch and prepare to use appropriately as its use grows. Considerable research is being done on Twitter and its increased popularity among students and staff. It will be interesting to note the growth of this medium from the beginning of this research up to the summary in chapter 5.

Related to the 140-character Twitter communication are instant messaging and texting. These forms of social media have been available for a longer period of time than Twitter, and have more history of misuse. Consider the following texting or sexting case. (Sexting refers to

an act of sending sexually explicit materials through mobile phones. The word is derived from the combination of the two terms “sex” and “texting” [uslegal.com].) In August 2005, Pamela Rogers, 28 years old, was sentenced to nine months in jail for engaging in sex with a 13-year-old student. The following February, she was released on probation after serving six months in jail. Two months later, she was arrested for violating her probation by contacting her victim and was released on bail. Later that same month, she was arrested for violating her probation a second time. This second violation was issued because she sent sexually explicit videos to her victim by camera phone. Not surprisingly, this time her bail was denied. In July 2006, Rogers was sentenced to a seven-year prison term, was terminated from her teaching position, and was forced to surrender her teaching license (Rasmussen, 2011).

In another texting case, middle school teacher, Ann Greenfield from Murray, Kentucky, inadvertently sent text messages that dealt with her efforts to purchase marijuana to a Kentucky State Trooper. The trooper set up a meeting with Greenfield, arrested her, and eventually charged her with conspiracy to traffic controlled substances, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia. She was terminated from her teaching contract in 2007, yet would be allowed to get her job back in 2009 if she underwent drug treatment and passed four random screens for drugs (Rasmussen, 2011).

Texting is an often-used mode of communication by high school students. The Kaiser Family Foundation Study indicates seventh-twelfth graders report spending an average of 1 hour and 35 minutes a day sending or receiving texts. Because of this, it is paramount that educators be familiar with this type of communication, and feel confident using it themselves (2011).

School leaders must be prepared to facilitate the appropriate use of all types of social media by their staff members. In looking at the use of Facebook and MySpace, blogs and

websites, Twitter, instant and text messaging or sexting, school leaders must understand that it makes no difference whether the use of social media by staff was done on or off campus. Similarly, it makes no difference if the use of social media is done on school time or after hours. Use of social media by staff has the same expectations whether the communication was staff initiated or in reaction to a student communication via social media. Policies need to be set for social media use, and training over the policies is necessary. Some states currently require set policies and training, but all states have strict legal prohibitions against any type of sexting involving staff members. Legal exposure for using social media inappropriately may be the responsibility of the staff member and/or the school district. Potential penalties for inappropriate use of social media depend on the content of the information shared. Penalties include revocation of a teaching license, termination of a teaching contract, and a potential prison term. See the following matrix for a comparison of social media and their proper use by school staff (Table 1).

**Table 1 Legal Ramifications of Various Social Media**

	Facebook and MySpace	Blogs and Websites	Twitter	Instant and Text Messaging	Sexting
On- or Off-Campus	No difference	No difference	No difference	No difference	No difference
School or Non-School Time	No difference	No difference	No difference	No difference	No difference
Student or Staff Initiated	Different if staff initiated	Different if staff initiated	Different if staff initiated	Different if staff initiated	Different if staff initiated
Court Case Reference	<i>Spanierman V. Hughes, 2008</i>	<i>Richerson v. Beckon, 2008</i>	None as of September 2011	Ann Greenfield, 2009	Pamela Rogers, 2005
Policy/Training Issue	Yes. Some States	Yes. Some States	Yes. Some States	Yes. Some States	Yes. All States
Legal Exposure	Staff member and/or school district	Staff member and/or school district	Staff member and/or school district	Staff member and/or school district	Staff member and or school district
Potential Penalty	Depends on the content of the information shared. Potential prison term, termination of contract, revocation of teaching license.	Depends on the content of the information shared. Potential prison term, termination of contract, revocation of teaching license	Depends on the content of the information shared. Potential prison term, termination of contract, revocation of teaching license	Depends on the content of the information shared. Potential prison term, termination of contract, revocation of teaching license	Depends on the content of the information shared. Potential prison term, termination of contract, revocation of teaching license

**Policies.** Many districts are no longer depending on their acceptable-use policy to be enough to prohibit inappropriate use of technology, and they are not leaving this prohibition to vaguely written expectations. For example, in Lamar County, Mississippi, the school district prohibits teachers from communicating with students via text messaging or public social-networking sites. A school district in Lee County, Florida, has issued a list of guidelines to teachers, suggesting they not communicate with students through sites such as MySpace, Twitter and Facebook. ~~It~~ is inappropriate for employees to communicate, regardless of the reason, with current students enrolled in the district on any public social networking website. This includes becoming ‘\_friends’ or allowing students access to personal web pages for communication reasons” (Murphy, 2010, p. 1). The legislature in the State of Missouri has had a bill introduced which would force schools to create online policies for teachers, covering any site to which a student has access. Similarly, the Utah State Department of Education now requires each school district to have a policy that addresses teacher-student electronic communications.

In Louisiana, a 2009 state law requires all districts in the state to implement policies requiring documentation of every electronic interaction between teachers and students through a nonschool-issued device, such as a personal cell phone or email account (House Bill No. 570, 2009). Parents also have the option of forbidding any communication between teachers and their child through personal electronic devices. This policy does not apply to one-way communication to groups of students regarding classroom assignments. Though many Louisiana teachers think the institution of this new state law is a strong reaction, the Louisiana Association of Educators stated that they ~~see~~ “see this as a necessary evil” (Rasmussen, 2011, p. 2). ~~But~~ critics question the measures, saying they will likely restrict appropriate communication between teachers and students and discourage the use of new technologies” (Ash, 2011, p. 1). Policies relating to

teacher-student electronic communications also exist in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Texas. More and more states are likely to follow suit.

The following cases defend the employer's right to expect employees to use computers correctly:

1. *Madrid v. Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph, 1986 (Colorado)*. The plaintiff prepared invoices, contract proposals, and business cards on the employer's computer for his private consulting business and was terminated.

2. *Leventhal v. Knapek, 2001 (New York)*. After receiving a complaint about an employee's misuse of state computers, the agency searched the employee's computer and discovered he had a personal tax-preparation program on the office computer. Ultimately he admitted he had copied the tax-preparation software onto his computer and had printed five personal tax returns from it. The employee was suspended for 30 days without pay and demoted two grades.

3. *Muick v. Glenayre Electronics, 2002 (Illinois)*. This case defended an employer's right to control computers at work. —They did not have to be reasonable conditions; but the abuse of access to workplace computers is so common (workers being prone to use them as media of gossip, titillation, and other entertainment and distraction) that reserving a right of inspection is so far from being unreasonable that the failure to do so might well be thought irresponsible.”

4. *Thygeson v. U.S. Bancorp, 2004 (Oregon)*. An employee who was fired for misuse of his employer's computer system brought action against the employer, alleging invasion of privacy based on the employer's monitoring of his personal e-mail and Internet access. The court denied the claim. An employee who was fired for misuse of his employer's computer

system brought action against the employer, alleging invasion of privacy based on the employer's monitoring of his personal e-mail and Internet access. The court denied the claim. The court indicated that when an employer has an explicit policy banning personal use of office computers, then monitoring is permitted, and the employee has no reasonable expectation of privacy.

5. Toney v. Independent School District, 2007 (Oklahoma). A tenured teacher's dismissal was upheld for willful neglect of duties as a teacher based in part on his admitted and proven use of his classroom computer for non-pedagogical purposes. In May of 2003, Toney was instructed that he should not play games on his computer when he was to be teaching his class. A 2005 memorandum to all teachers informed them that their computers should be used for educational purposes only. Then in February of 2006, Toney was placed on a plan of assistance that directed him to refrain from computer use during class time and to refrain from any use of the computer to play card games or other entertainment. The district had installed software on his computer that monitored his computer usage. This software indicated that games were accessed on numerous occasions, and staff reported that they observed Toney accessing games on his computer. He was dismissed from his duties as a teacher (Rasmussen, 2011).

Proofpoint, an Internet security firm, conducted a study in 2010 of companies with 1,000 employees or more. They found that 17 percent of those employers had issues with their employees' use of social media. Eight percent of those companies said they actually had to dismiss an employee due to inappropriate behavior on social media sites. This is double the amount reported the previous year, when only 4 percent indicated they had terminated someone due to misuse of social media. The study also found that 45 percent disciplined an employee for violating multimedia sharing/posting policies; 13 percent of US companies investigated an

exposure event involving mobile or Web-based short message services; 17 percent disciplined an employee for violating blog or message-board polices” (Ostrow, 2010, p. 1). Proofpoint offered two factors for this increase: employers are more closely monitoring social media sites, and their employees are not using common sense when posting about work life. They continue to make foolish remarks about their employers and to share sensitive corporate information (Ostrow, 2010).

However, potential limitations on discipline do exist about which school districts must be aware. In many states, employee privacy statutes restrict employers from disciplining employees for actions related to their off-duty conduct. Also, in some states labor relations laws promise public employees the right to organize and to bargain collectively with their employers and to participate in other protected concerted goings-on with or without a union. If a teacher is blogging on issues relating to terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining issues, or union association or activity, the speech will potentially be protected by such labor relations statutes (*Konop v. Hawaiian Airlines, Inc.*, 2002).

Another potential protection for online activity might be related to existing “whistleblower” statutes. The federal government, along with most states, offer protection against retaliatory termination of an employee who shares evidence concerning how the employer is breaking a law.

If school officials wish to investigate a blog, they must first review the posting of information or pictures to determine the authenticity and accuracy of the information and whether it violates any set policy or any criminal or civil statute. If it is determined that the information is accurate, and that it violates policy or law, the following steps should be taken:



1. Consider whether the conduct has criminal implications. If the answer is yes, contact law enforcement.
2. Meet with the teacher to go over the circumstances, and if requested, allow the teacher to include union representation, if requested.
3. Share the online information with the teacher, and if the teacher admits to the posting, let him or her know that the investigation will continue with possible disciplinary action resulting.
4. If the teacher denies posting the information, conduct further investigation to substantiate whether he or she actually posted the information, if what is posted is the issue, and if it is as it was originally posted. The officials should look into all of the claims made by the teacher to determine their validity. It will be absolutely necessary to validate that the teacher and not someone else was the actual poster.
5. Next, review the distribution of the content that was posted and the effect the dissemination may have on the teacher's ability to carry out his or her duties.
6. Substantiate whether the posting disrupted the educational environment.
7. Determine if the behavior is remediable or irreparable, and then enforce the proper discipline (Todd et al., 2008).

Every policy shared with staff should make the users aware that they have no expectation of privacy when using district equipment to create, maintain, or post comments on their blogs or those of others, and that their blogging may be reviewed at any time by school administration. Along with this part of the policy, clear and rational expectations relating to any online, on- or off-duty activities of school staff should be clarified.

The following information was shared in *Employee Use, Misuse, and Abuse of Social Network Sites* by Todd, DiJohn and Aldridge, and offers considerations teachers should ponder when blogging as well as other thoughts districts should consider when looking to adopt blogging related policies:

For Blogging Teachers:

1. Public v. anonymous: are you willing to sign your name to the comments you post?
2. A blog has the potential to be read by thousands of people, including those you are writing about.
3. Do not blog on the job.
4. Use your own equipment, not the school district's equipment.
5. The truth is always better than the opposite, so think before you blog.
6. If your blog is public, do not use personally identifiable information when discussing colleagues, parents, and especially students.

For District Blog Policies:

1. Encourage bloggers to take responsibility for their posting.
2. Prohibit the use of school mascots, symbols, logos, or other district trademarks on employee blogs.
3. Prohibit blogging during the school day.
4. Prohibit the use of school district property for personal blogs.
5. Require the use of a disclaimer regarding the statement on blogs.

6. Develop the policy with staff bloggers' input, make sure staff members are aware of the policy, and give notice that administrators may visit the blogs at any time (Todd et al., 2008, pg. 4).

The school district has the ability and authority to discipline a teacher for online conduct, whether on or off duty depending on: (1) whether the teacher has tenure; (2) the type of offending behavior, which may be defined by statute; (3) the correlation, or nexus, between the conduct and job performance; (4) the conditions and terms of the collective bargaining agreement; and (5) First Amendment constitutional considerations (Todd et al., 2008).

The Kansas Association of School Boards states that the school's authority to discipline hinges on the following questions: (1) Is the online conduct disruptive to the teaching environment? (2) Does the conduct negatively affect the teacher's ability to perform his or her job? (3) Is the teacher capable of being an effective teacher and role model to impressionable students? (Key point: Inappropriate online materials may constitute "immoral" behavior.)

### **Promising Practices**

Throughout the process of researching the definition of social media, the need for the school leaders' resource guide and how it is being used in P-12 education, it became clear that examples of promising practices in the use of social media in schools do exist. For the sake of this study, the practices shared include those used both by educators when working with students, and by educators when interacting with others in their field.

A theme that persists in the study of social media use in education is one included in the title, *Your Students Love Social Media . . . and So Can You*, an article by Camille Jackson, for *Teaching Tolerance* (2011). The article reminds all educators that the fear of new technology is nothing new, and that there were many of the same or similar concerns when the television was

initially introduced. Teens now, as always, search for affirmation, and social media may provide them with opportunities to build their identities. Students of this generation connect by using social media. Pam Rutledge, a psychologist and director of Media Psychology Resource Center, is quoted in Jackson's article, "People connect—that's what they do. That's a biological function, not an aberration. The desire to grow up and do these adult things overrides caution. It's not pathological. It's normal teen behavior" (p.1).

Social media can help students in specific ways. For example, Erica Robles, an assistant professor of media and communications at New York University, found that students felt less pressure when asked to answer questions using Twitter, even if they felt they might be giving the wrong answers. It helped them participate more freely (Jackson, 2011). The same article relates that this is also the case for students of various ages. A middle-school teacher shares how he uses social media as a tool to help his students learn from people right in their own school as well as from around the globe.

Building trust with students using social media is a way to help them monitor themselves. "One way to model digital citizenship is to be there online and let yourself be seen as part of that world" (Jackson, 2011, p. 1). He adds, "Social media is part of kids' lives. Either we acknowledge it exists and allow ourselves to be part of the conversation, or it is one more way school becomes irrelevant to kids. Any tool is a weapon if you hold it right" (p. 1). Lehman goes on to say that when students are trusted, they work to monitor themselves. Recently, in his Philadelphia high school, a few students had started a page on Facebook that slammed the school, and the students took it upon themselves to make it go away. They learned by doing, not by being told to do something.

Peer interaction is another recurring positive reason for using social media. In an economic time where money for education is limited, online collaborative learning spaces may be just what students need when the district's hiring of extra teachers is not likely to happen. One such example is a social media study site called Grockit. (The word "grock," means to understand something intuitively or by empathy [Wikipedia].) This site offers test-prep services focusing on English and math for grades 8-12, and science and history are on the horizon. Grockit provides open enrollment for a free Summer Enrichment Academy and is designed to help keep students current, helping them by participating in group-study online forums not to fall behind during the summer months. These students help each other, and they do it for free with millions of their peers on the subject of their own choosing. They use chats, and they earn points for their own achievements or for helping peers. The group-study and collaborative-learning opportunities are free, and parents may purchase some additional information for data specific to their child's needs. As Farb Nivi, Grockit's creator and CEO, suggests, "Because of that social factor, the power in it isn't just answering a question—it's the positive peer influence on learning" (Devaney, May 2010, p. 2).

In another article, "The New Writing Pedagogy: Using social networking tools to keep up with student interests," Angela Pascopella and Will Richardson (2009) write about some amazing ways students are using technology to change the way writing is done. For example, a special-needs sixth-grader in California created a blog where he wrote as though he were a World War II veteran. Responses came in from around the country, and the reinforcement naturally helped keep him engaged in writing in a way he had never before experienced. He went from being an outcast to becoming a confident writer, one who no longer needed special-education assistance.

Web-based social networking tools like blogs, wikis, YouTube and Facebook may very likely be the next real modification of writing pedagogy. (A wiki is a website that allows anyone to add, delete, or revise content by using a web browser.) This would come after the most recent one that was more than 40 years ago when the teaching of writing in schools moved to the actual process of writing. This new way of writing could very well focus on writing for global audiences, and may well facilitate conversations between those who are passionate about certain topics, thus increasing the real joy of writing.

Specific “new literacies” for the 21st century readers and writers were published by the National Council of Teachers of English in 2008. Among those literacies are the capability to “build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally,” to “design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes,” and to “create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts” (Pascopella & Richardson, 2009, p. 46). To do this type of writing work, one must expand the way one thinks about writing instruction through the use of online social media tools.

Students are currently writing for real audiences and for real purposes. They are posting information on Facebook and on other social media, where it will be shared with so many more people than when they wrote solely for the teacher, for others in the class, or simply to hang on the doors of their home refrigerators. They are writing in real ways, filling digital spaces, and communicating differently. Educators need to guide them in this new 21st century way of communicating. This type of writing goes beyond language-arts classes into social studies, and even math. “How can a math teacher ignore the collaborative potentials of having kids work in a Google spreadsheet?” asks Hicks, the author of the book, *The Digital Writing Workshop*.

–That’s writing too. Collaboration on almost every level is just a part of the equation today”  
(Hicks in Pascopella & Richardson, 2009, p. 47).

A guest blogger, Brian Jenkins, posted the following question on GilsMethod.com:

–Social media, can it actually enhance education?” Then he offered ways teachers are using social media to enhance the learning experience:

1. Facebook groups: Teachers can create Facebook groups for their classes or a particular class project and ask students to join the groups. Students and their teachers can discuss class-related topics on a platform enjoyed by students. Teachers can use the walls on their Facebook group pages to provide materials such as articles, news clips, videos, and links to pertinent websites. Students can use discussion boards to share their thoughts.
2. Facebook applications: Facebook provides more than 200 education-related applications. These tools allow teachers to provide presentations, tests, and notes for their students. The study groups application lets students work together outside of the classroom. They can work on group projects, share notes, and help each other prepare for tests. The Webinaria Screencast Recorder lets teachers make videos to share with their students on Facebook.
3. Social bookmarks: Tools such as Delicious and Diigo are being used by teachers to provide current articles, websites, and other subject matter instead of using traditional textbooks. Diigo allows teachers to highlight text and photographs and add sticky notes to bookmarked pages, which provide teachers ways to include their thoughts and ideas. Students can subscribe to the Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and are automatically notified when a new bookmark is added.

4. Wikis: Teachers use wikis to provide students access to class documents, outlines, and other essential information. (A wiki is a website that allows anyone to add, delete, or revise content by using a web browser.) Students also have the opportunity to add their own content. The format encourages an exchange of ideas and adds an entertaining element to students' homework.
5. Twitter: Teachers can ask students to create a few education-related tweets every week. Teachers and students can ask questions and respond via twitter. The tweet often inspires a productive conversation about important topics and current events. It is a great venue for students who might be too shy to respond to questions in the classroom. Teachers may set up conversations with students using "hashtags" (a word or phrase on social-networking Websites preceded by a hash mark (#), used within a message to identify a topic of interest).
6. YouTube: Teachers can create a YouTube channel and develop and provide informative videos or slideshows. They can also provide links to relevant YouTube videos.
7. Online documents: Teachers can use Scribd and other social publishing websites to upload online materials to one location. Students can access notes, worksheets, and other things from home with their computer through video. Yahoo Live, Skype, and Ustream bring guest speakers into the classroom from remote locations. This can certainly add some relevance and interest to the learning experience.

In summary, Facebook, like most other social media, has many potentially positive uses in the classroom. Social media is very much a part of students' everyday lives, and though it can



have its challenges, it can also provide some extremely useful applications that promote the learning process, both in and out of the classroom.

In *Communicating and Connecting with Social Media*, William Ferriter, Jason Ramsden and Eric Sheninger share common patterns of participation that illustrate how teachers and principals can benefit from using social media. The six common patterns of participation are: (1) sharing knowledge and resources; (2) monitoring educational news sources; (3) digitally attending important conferences; (4) encouraging reflection; (5) gathering instant feedback, and (6) mentoring colleagues (Ferriter et al., 2011, pp. 37-38). All of these areas of participation provide educators additional opportunities to learn from others and improve their effectiveness as educators.

An additional idea presented in *Communicating and Connecting with Social Media*, is the importance of educators' starting with one social-media space or one digital professional learning network (PLN). "Once you find a social-media space that seems like a good fit, jump right in and start networking. The more you practice—both with the tools you have chosen and the communication patterns necessary for connecting with others digitally—the more comfortable you will be learning with your 21<sup>st</sup> century PLN" (Ferriter et al., 2011, p. 43).

The use of social media for learning is less than 10 years old, yet the possibilities appear to be almost endless. Regardless of the social media used, educators have many options at their fingertips. The world of social media use is full of promise, and it is up to teachers and school leaders to determine what is best for their students.

## **Challenges**

The birth of social networks may be one of the most significant inventions in the entire technology age, and like many of history's great inventions, there are many who will make

challenges to its use, and much will be said about its negatives before it is embraced by the masses.

In a post on the Mashable website, entitled “The Case for Social Media in Schools,” Sarah Kessler (2010) shares five main reasons she and many teachers believe schools must embrace this form of communication and learning while still addressing the challenges that many voice against social media:

1. Social media is not going away: A 2010 study done by the Kaiser Family Foundation, indicates that the ownership of mobile devices by 8- to 18-year-olds has gone from 39 percent in 2005 to 66 percent in 2010. Interestingly, about half of these same young people said they use media either “most” (31 percent) or “some” (25 percent) of the time while they are doing their homework (Kaiser Study, 2010). Seventy-four percent of all seventh- to twelfth-grade students surveyed said they had at least one profile on a social media site. If they are already using it, why not embrace it in the education process? As Elizabeth Delmatoff, a seventh-grade teacher from Portland, Oregon, says, “It could be a distraction for kids to text their friends during a lecture, just as it would be for them to play cards or to nap” (p. 2).
2. When kids are engaged, they learn better: A third- and fourth-grade teacher in Minnesota, Matt Hardy, describes the “giddy” responses his students show when he has them begin to use blogs. He has utilized blogs in his classes since 2007 as a way to help motivate students to write. He adds, “Blogging was a way to get students into that mode where, ‘Hey, I’m writing this not just for an assignment, not just for a teacher, but my friend will see it and maybe even other people will stumble across it.’ So there is power in that” (p. 3). Another teacher wrote about how much work the

- kids put into their blogs. They came to school early to work on their blogs, and the quality of their work increased.
3. Safe social media tools are available—and they're free: Hardy developed his own platform to avoid some of the pitfalls associated with social media use and students. This platform allowed him to approve and monitor everything his students were posting online. He developed a web-based tool other teachers could use called kidblog.org. It is free, as are other such web-based platforms as Edmodo and Edublogs.
  4. Replace online procrastination with social education: A recent Nielson study showed that between 2004 and 2009, children between the ages of 2 and 11 spent 63 percent more time online. Since students are spending so much time online, it behooves educators to incorporate learning into this time. In one example, a teacher posted an extra assignment online for her students to complete every day after school. The assignments would vary from —Comment on one of President Obama's speeches" to —make a two-minute video about something you saw on your way home which was a bad example of sustainability" (p. 5). It earned the students no extra credit, no reward at all, yet the teacher reported that approximately 100 out of her 125 students consistently participated in some fashion. —They were just as happy to do work rather than talk trash," Delmatoff says. —All they wanted was to be with their friends" (p. 5).
  5. Social media encourages collaboration instead of cliques: Social media is a natural collaborative tool. When students critique and comment on each other's work, access each other easily, and work in teams to generate content, they are naturally learning to

be good team members. Traditional education methods, such as teacher lectures, do not help students learn skills necessary to be effective collaborators. Also, if an individual is typically a bit introverted, or not considered popular in ways seen as important in middle or high school, online collaboration can completely remove that unfortunate social stigma. Students are seen as valuable members of online learning based purely on whether they have good insights or if they ask good quality questions.

6. Cell phones aren't the enemy: In 2011, a seventh-grade Portland, Oregon, teacher Elizabeth Delmatoff reported that her school actually collected student's cell phone contact information in a time when 69 percent of American high schools had banned cell phones (Common Sense Media, a nonprofit organization studying the use of technology by children). Delmatoff texted messages to students with attendance issues to remind them to get to school on time. She said her "Texts on Time" increased attendance without costing the school any money. The cell phone is a parent-funded communication channel, and schools need to use it to reach and engage the students (p. 6).

However, Jim Klein, the director of information services and technology for the Saugus, California, Union School District said that educators need to be prepared when moving toward using social media in their schools. "Social media, as with all things public, present risks. School leaders need to not only understand these risks but also to have a plan to mitigate them" (Pascopella & Richardson, 2009, p. 49). He mentions providing teachers with the necessary tools to monitor and sustain oversight of what is happening online; it is a "necessary step" to take for younger students especially, as they are being trained to move more into public spaces in the

online world. Perhaps most importantly, he reminds the reader that teachers must be trained on the legal implications of inappropriate use and the need to have a clear policy, one that parents read, understand, and sign, on in-school and out-of-school use of social media tools.

A bill became effective on August 28, 2011, that would have formally banned teachers from befriending students on social networking websites like Facebook. The law was seen as an aggressive move toward dictating the interactions educators are allowed in online social spaces.

Missouri Senate Bill 54, also known as the Amy Hestir Student Protection Act, named for a Missouri student who allegedly had a sexual relationship with an abusive teacher beginning when she was 12. The case, which happened decades ago, went beyond Missouri's statute of limitations and never came to trial. —The law expressly forbade direct, private online contact (or exclusive access) between social media-savvy youth and their educators, its wording may permit teachers to use more transparent platforms, like the kind of Facebook pages that businesses and organizations often use” (Cheng, 2011, p. 1).

The law was vetoed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon in October, 2011. The governor signed a later bill into law. This new bill required schools to create teacher-student communications policies by March 1, 2012. Yes, as Dr. Wycoff said, this topic is a moving target.

Andrea Lunsford, a professor of rhetoric and writing at Stanford University, writes in the August 2009 *Wired* article that, in the area of writing alone, changes are coming —the likes of which we haven't seen since Greek civilization.” She does not believe that technology is negatively impacting students' abilities to write, but that it is actually reviving it. Her research suggests that students are writing in an environment vastly different from that of just one generation ago. After a five-year study of student writing, where she collected 14,672 student

writing samples—including formal essays, journal entries, emails, chat sessions and blog posts—Lunsford found that technology is pushing writing literacy in new directions that educators must begin to understand (Thompson, 2009, pg. 1). She also points to her own Stanford students who are almost always writing for an ~~audience~~.” Interestingly, in contrast to some negative expectations, in her research Lunsford could not find a single example of the abbreviated ~~text speak~~” in any academic paper turned in by even one of her first-year students.

### **Digital Citizenship**

~~D~~igital behavior is presently a major issue in the use of social media, and will continue to be in future decades,” writes Dr. Gerald Bailey, author of *Digital Citizenship in Schools* (G. Bailey, personal communication, February 23, 2011). In moving forward with the necessary use of social media in schools, he also emphasizes the need for all staff to understand issues of use, misuse, and abuse of digital media on school time. The use is simply the appropriate utilization of digital media for its intended purposes. He then compared this to abuse, for example sending hate mail (not on school time, using a privately owned laptop), and how this might be confused by the staff member as not being an issue since it was done off school time with one’s own equipment. Then there is the area of abuse when something inappropriate is done in a more obvious, egregious way. He indicated that digital behavior will remain a major issue for the coming years with the increased use of social media. He also believes that educators cannot move forward with the appropriate use of digital technologies unless there is consistent teaching of the proper use, avoidance of misuse, and abuse of technology.

When Mark Prensky labeled two very different groups of technology users as ~~digital natives~~” and ~~digital immigrants~~” in an article he authored in 2001, he appropriately identified how very different young people and their use of technology may be in contrast to those others

who are somewhat new to it. Because many teachers are still immigrants to this digital world the natives are so comfortable living in, they must learn how to help these digital natives use it appropriately. Both groups need to increase their ability to be better digital citizens (Prensky, 2001).

In their book, *Digital Citizenship in Schools*, Dr. Mike Ribble and Dr. Gerald Bailey (2007) share nine elements that will help a school prepare itself and its students to be informed digital citizens. “Digital citizenship aims to teach everyone (not just children) what technology users must understand in order to use digital technologies effectively and appropriately” (p. 10). The following nine definitions can help provide a way of understanding digital citizenship and many of the issues surrounding the use, misuse, and abuse of technology:

1. Digital access: full electronic participation in society
2. Digital commerce: the buying and selling of goods online
3. Digital communication: the electronic exchange of information
4. Digital literacy: the capacity to use digital technology and knowing when and how to use it
5. Digital etiquette: the standards of conduct expected by other digital technology users
6. Digital law: the legal rights and restrictions governing technology use
7. Digital rights and responsibilities: the privileges and freedoms extended to all digital technology users, and the behavioral expectations that come with them
8. Digital health and wellness: the elements of physical and psychological well-being related to digital technology use
9. Digital security: the precautions that all technology users must take to guarantee their personal safety and the security of their network (p. 10).

More and more information is being shared about digital citizenship. Media expert, Professor Henry Jenkins, from the University of Southern California, shared his comments in an interview with the National Education Association entitled, *The Participation Gap* (2008.)

Digital literacy is the new hidden curriculum. In the 1960s, we talked about access to opera, encyclopedias, theaters, museums, and dinner table conversations about culture and world events. The research showed us two things – those with access to this hidden curriculum developed learning skills that enabled them to do better in school. They also developed a style of discourse that prompted teachers to respond to them more positively than the kids without the same experiences. Today, the ability to navigate social networks, play games, or participate in online conversations affects the way young people present themselves to the world. There’s an informal learning that takes place as they interact with digital media, which gives way to certain skills, competencies, and literacies (Jenkins, 2008).

As Dr. Jenkins stated, digital literacy includes the ability to navigate social networks. In order for students to learn this navigation skill, their teachers and school leaders must lead the way.

The precepts of digital citizenship must be included in a resource guide for the facilitation of social media. Digital citizenship in itself manages the use of social media, and though the use of social media was once looked upon as a fad for the very young, it now appears here to stay. There is no time like the present to begin figuring out how to use this new media appropriately, strategically and wisely.



## Emergence of Issues

Nick Bilton connects the differences between the digital natives and digital immigrants with the way they create and share content in his book, *I Live in the Future and Here's How it Works* (2010). He reflects that digital natives are creative thinkers, but they also have the need to document.

If you watched the inauguration of President Obama in 2009, you will have seen this too. As the president awaited his swearing in, his ten-year-old daughter, Malia Obama, sat behind him taking pictures with her digital camera. There were literally hundreds of thousands of people taking pictures of that event—pictures of Barack Obama would appear on the front page of almost every newspaper and news website around the world—yet his daughter wanted to document the event through her own eyes (p. 94).

This is how the students of today see things, and want to experience things, and this is the way in that they will potentially learn best. This is also the way teachers will need to teach, and they will need to do so in a manner that will be best for students and for the teachers.

The future of social media is referenced quite powerfully in one of the Pew Research publications, *The Future of Online Socializing*, on July 2, 2010. The survey was conducted on 895 technology stakeholders and critics. Eighty-five percent agreed with the statement: "In 2020, when I look at the big picture and consider my personal friendships, marriage and other relationships, I see that the Internet has mostly been a positive force on my social world. And this will only grow more true in the future" (p. 1).

Only 14 percent agreed with the opposite statement, which posited: "In 2020, when I look at the big picture and consider my personal friendships, marriage and other relationships, I see that the Internet has mostly been a negative force on my social world. And this will only grow more true in the future" (p. 1).

This same survey found that many people are confident that technological advances will continue to revolutionize social relations online. Among the advances suggested were; “powerful collaborative visualization decision-based tools; . . . and instant thought transmission in a telepathic format” (p. 1). Those surveyed also indicated that though the tools are changing at a rapid pace, basic human nature is slow to adjust.

Being connected by social media varies significantly due to the age of the user. In a Harris Poll conducted on 2,258 adults, 59 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds favored interacting with acquaintances using social media rather than face-to-face. This compared with only 38 percent of 45- to 54-year-olds and just 25 percent of those 55 and older. The younger the users, the more they preferred the use of social media to stay connected with acquaintances. The results of this survey have future implications in that more and more people will not only feel comfortable using social media, but they may prefer to use it (Harris Poll, 2010).

### **Summary**

Chapter Two has explored the literature available on the subject of social media use by school staff. School leadership in this area is vital to the successful use of social media by school staff. Bringing the leadership together with the staff is essential to using social media in ways which will enhance the teaching and learning process for students.

An extensive amount of literature is available on the effective use of social media in P-12 education, yet the amount of information on how to safely implement it in schools is still somewhat sketchy. Implementing the use of social media in schools can be a courageous move for school leaders, and having a resource guide to provide some comfort in increasing its use will be necessary. The resource guide produced by this dissertation is perceived by these experts as

one which presents needed information for school leaders to use when facilitating social media use by their staff members.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

### **Introduction**

Specific research objectives guided the decision of what would be incorporated into the *School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff*. These specific objectives directed what was included in the ultimate product. The research objectives were: (a) examine the literature and get feedback from social media experts to establish current practices and the need for such a product; (b) decide what type of information needs to be shared with school leaders in the area of social media use by school staff; (c) develop a design for school leaders to use to facilitate social media use by school staff; and (d) create a resource guide for school leaders to use to help facilitate social media use by their school staff members.

Gall, Borg, and Gall's (2003) educational research and development (R & D) methodology was used in this research. The development of an R & D dissertation must be validated through a specific process. The steps of this R & D process were followed very carefully. Chapter 3 will succinctly outline the seven-step development cycle and how each step was followed (see Figure 2).

The basis of Gall, Borg, and Gall's (2003) educational research and development (R & D) methodology can be found in industry. In industry, a systematic process is used to develop, test, and refine products. This process requires an outlined sequence of field-testing, assessment, and modification for creating well-designed educational programs and products. It was feasible to develop this type of resource guide using the R & D process.

The R & D process was followed to create the school leader's resource guide for the facilitation of social media use by school staff. The steps were as follows: (1) research analysis, needs assessment and proof of concept; (2) product planning and design; (3) preliminary product

development; (4) preliminary field testing; (5) product revision; (6) main field testing; (7) and the final product revision and dissemination (Gall, Borg & Gall, 2003). The Gall, Borg, and Gall model included added steps together with operational product revision and operational field testing. These steps were omitted due to the time and budget restraints of this research.

Below, Figure 2 provides a graphic representation of the R & D steps which were used. This illustrates the product development progression that was followed in this investigation. And subsequent to Figure 2, Table 2 outlines the chronology which was followed to carry out this R & D process.

**Figure 2 Gall, Borg, and Gall’s Research and Development (R&D) Process**



**Table 2 Research and Development Sequence and Timeline of the Investigation**

<b>R &amp; D Step</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Results</b>
Literature review	Spring 2010 to Spring 2011	Review literature	Began formulating references and ideas for product
Proposal to committee	September 29, 2011	Prepared first three chapters.	Reviewed the literature and studied the research process, and then sought approval from the Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects
Research Analysis, needs assessment & proof of concept	Fall 2011	Determined feasibility of product through use of questionnaires	Recorded information from completed questionnaires and recorded reactions to guide
Develop product prototype	Fall 2011	Developed the school leader's guide prototype	Prepared for preliminary field test
Preliminary field test	November/December 2011	Guide reviewed by experts/practitioners	Recorded information shared by experts/practitioners who evaluated the guide
Revision of product	January 2012	Improved product using feedback from experts	Prepared for main field test
Main Field Test	February/March 2012	Guide reviewed by experts/practitioners	Recorded information shared by experts/practitioners who evaluated the guide
Final Revision of product	March 2012	Revised product with feedback from main field test, prepared for dissemination and inclusion as chapter in dissertation	Final preparation for dissertation defense
Defend Dissertation	April 2012	Present dissertation to committee	Defense of research, dissemination of guide

## **Step 1. Research Analysis and Needs Assessment/Proof of Concept**

The research analysis included a review of the existing literature pertaining to social media use by students, staff and school leaders, the ways that social media was being used, and First Amendment implications concerning privacy and freedom of speech. It also covered existing policies, promising practices and challenges created by the use of social media by staff members in P-12 education. It concluded with the study of digital citizenship and the emergence of issues in the area of staff use of social media. Information discovered in the literature review indicated school leaders must understand the demand for social media to be used in learning. The literature also indicates many school leaders and school staff members do not understand their rights and responsibilities in the use of social media. This dissertation was designed to create a resource guide that will show school staff what their rights and responsibilities are concerning the use of social media both on and off campus.

This need for this type of resource guide was further validated by information drawn from a pool of identified experts. Three experts were selected who were recognized for their expertise, national conference presentations and/or publications in the area of social media use in P-12 schools. Needs assessment/proof of concept experts chosen were Dr. Gerald Bailey, Ginger Lewman, and Donna Whiteman. Their qualifications are listed in Table 3. In the needs assessment/proof of concept stage, information was gathered through a questionnaire using questions the researcher thought most plausible based on the analysis of the literature. Then the same three experts shared their reactions to the proposed resource guide table of contents (Table 4) in determining the need for this type of resource guide. Their feedback was also used to guide and shape the planning and development of the product. Their comments reinforced the need for this type of resource guide.

**Table 3 Needs Assessment/Proof of Concept Experts**

Name	Qualifications
Dr. Gerald Bailey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Emeritus Professor from Kansas State University</li><li>2. Published 17 books and over 250 articles focusing on leadership and technology as a tool to transform education</li><li>3. Nationally renowned author in the area of digital citizenship</li></ol>
Ginger Lewman	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Education Consultant at Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas (ESSDACK)</li><li>2. Director of the f2f Program, Turning Point Learning Center at ESSDACK</li><li>3. Presenter at national conferences on project based learning and the incorporation of technology in this process</li></ol>
Donna Whiteman, JD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Assistant Executive Director/Legal Services for the Kansas Association of School Boards</li><li>2. Legal expert on school law</li><li>3. Presenter on topics involving social media use by P-12 staff members</li></ol>

The three experts shared their opinions on the need for this type of resource guide by responding to a written questionnaire that asked them what types of issues should be addressed along with their ideas on the organization of the resource guide. (See Appendix C) The information gathered from the experts indicated that there was a great need to train school leaders to understand their rights and responsibilities in facilitating the use of social media by their staff members. Most of the literature review information found dealt with why the need for social media use is present, with very little information available for school leaders and staff to help them use it appropriately. The resource guide’s ultimate objective is to provide school leaders the necessary information to facilitate social media use by their staff. A definite plan for the type of information necessary to accomplish this was further determined after gaining



information from the experts. After the questionnaires and reactions to the proposed table of contents (See Appendix C and Appendix D) were returned, the responses were compiled and studied. The resulting consensus of these experts guided the design of the resource guide.

All three experts indicated that there was a strong need for some type of guide, and all agreed that the information referenced in the table of contents was thorough. Donna Whiteman wrote that the need for this guide was critical. Dr. Gerald Bailey indicated that a practical resource guide which a school leader could put her hands on would be a very good thing, and he went on to write that there are not enough resources like this. Ms. Lewman shared, “Consider creating a guideline of behaviors, not procedures.” She was concerned that it would be difficult to write a comprehensive guide. This researcher agreed. All three wrote that school leaders could use more resources to focus on behaviors which help them know when to intervene, investigate, and act on potential inappropriate social media use by school staff.

All three experts were concerned about the issue of privacy and security, and this reinforced the section on privacy in the resource guide. Dr. Bailey discussed the use, misuse and abuse of social media by school staff, and these three areas were incorporated into the three-drawer toolbox metaphor. Mrs. Whiteman appreciated the three-drawer metaphor pointing out that it could also show how a staff member may start with a top-drawer type of positive use, and then how it can go badly leading to a bottom-drawer type of abuse issue.

The three experts questioned all believed that school leaders must be comfortable leading their staff members in using social media. School leaders do not necessarily need to be the expert users of social media, but they do need to be familiar with it, and supportive of those who use it to positively impact teaching and learning. Donna Whiteman specifically referenced the need to teach staff members to be careful about their use of social media, keeping in mind that

anything they communicate digitally should be appropriate enough to appear on the front page of any newspaper.

All three addressed the concern over the blurring of lines for staff members in the use of social media on and off school grounds, as well as the nebulous issues surrounding social media use on and off duty. They each strongly encouraged the creation of a *School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media use by School Staff*.

## **Step 2. Product Planning and Design**

A plan for developing a school leader's resource guide for the facilitation of social media use by school staff was created because of the absence of resources discovered in the literature review and the information provided by experts in the Needs Assessment/Proof of Concept Stage. Only a few resource guides for school leaders to utilize in facilitating social media use existed at the time of this research. The existing guides focused more on student use and did not deal with legal issues surrounding social media use by school staff. Additionally, due to the strong encouragement by experts in Step 1, materials were used to assist in developing an initial design for the resource guide. It was designed around the following table of contents with some additions being made to the digital citizenship chapter:

**Table 4 Resource Guide Table of Contents**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	
<b><i>Introduction</i></b>	
	Who Should Use this Resource Guide?
	How Should You Use this Resource Guide?
<b><i>Chapter 1: Social Media:</i></b>	
	The Definition of social media
	Increased use by students, teachers and school leaders
	The need for school leaders to facilitate its use
	The toolbox metaphor: Use, misuse and abuse
	User Notes and Resources
<b><i>Chapter 2: Social Media Use by Staff in P-12 Education:</i></b>	
	First Amendment Issues: Privacy Concerns
	First Amendment Issues: Free Speech Concerns
	Relevant Court Cases: Facebook/My Space
	Relevant Court Cases: Blogging/Websites
	Relevant Court Cases: Twitter, Instant, Text Messaging, and Sexting
	User Notes and Resources
<b><i>Chapter 3: Promising Practices: Why should you use it?</i></b>	
	User Notes and Resources
<b><i>Chapter 4: Digital Citizenship: How should you use it?</i></b>	
	User Notes and Resources
<b><i>Chapter 5: Emergence of Issues/Challenges</i></b>	
	User Notes and Resources
<b><i>Chapter 6: Avoiding Adverse Employment Actions</i></b>	
	Employer's Rights and Policies
	User Notes
	Resources
<b><i>Appendix A - Definition of Terms</i></b>	
<b><i>Appendix B - Relevant Court Cases</i></b>	

### **Step 3. Product Development**

The design and continued planning of the product resulted from the information gathered during the review of the literature and the information gathered from social media experts who have a knowledge of the use of social media in education. This resource guide is intended to be used as a guide for school leaders, and not specifically a technical manual. The goal was to select a framework which allowed and encouraged easy use by school leaders along with providing necessary information. The specific objectives of the resource guide were revised as the questionnaires were analyzed.

Various resources were included in the resource guide to help school leaders gain further information to assist them in the area of social media use by their staff. These resources were listed at the end of each chapter. Additionally, there was an extra page provided at the end of each section for the school leader to make notes of updated information in this ever-changing world of social media use.

### **Step 4. Preliminary Field Test**

The first evaluation of the resource guide was done through an initial assessment in the preliminary field test step (Dick & Carey, 2009; Gall, Borg & Gall, 2003). Five experts were asked to respond to an evaluation form to both review and evaluate the initial prototype. Criteria used to select the reviewers was similar to that criteria used in the needs assessment part of Step 1, with the addition of practitioners, specifically a teacher and school leader, who use social media. The preliminary field testers had to meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Be recognized as an expert in the area of social media use in education, or;
2. Be a practitioner, specifically a teacher, presently using social media with P-12 students, or;

3. Be a school leader presently using social media.

Preliminary field testers included Ms. Shelly Walston, Mr. Bob Mellon, Dr. Steve Wycoff, Mrs. Anne Collier and Mrs. Marjorie Blaufuss. Table 5 includes information regarding the preliminary field testers’ qualifications. The researcher chose to include one local practitioner in both the preliminary and main field test steps to insure local understanding and benefit to doing this research.

**Table 5 Preliminary Field Test Experts**

Name	Qualifications
Shelly Walston	1. Maize South High School Journalism Teacher (Maize, Kansas) 2. Practitioner presently using Twitter with her high school journalism students
Bob Mellon	1. Clearwater High School Principal (Clearwater, Kansas) 2. School leader presently using social media
Dr. Steve Wycoff	1. Chief Innovation Officer at the Educational Services & Staff Development Association of Central Kansas (ESSDACK) 2. Expert and state/national presenter on the innovation needs of schools, and trainer in the use of social media in schools
Anne Collier	1. Editor of NetFamilyNews.org and Co-Director of ConnectSafely.org 2. International and National presenter on safe digital media use
Marjorie Blaufuss	1. Kansas National Education Association Staff Attorney 2. Legal expert on social media use by school staff

After selecting experts to help evaluate the resource guide, each was sent an informed consent form (see Appendix F), Preliminary Field Test Instructions (see Appendix G), and an evaluation form for “The School Leader’s Guide to Facilitating Social Media use by School Staff.” The evaluation form (see Appendix H) was made up of three parts: (1) The evaluation of the format of the resource book; (2) the evaluation of the specific content of the resource book; and (3) comments to share for each of the specific pages and sections of the resource guide. The information requested in the evaluation form were selected based upon the analysis of the literature and the researcher’s personal experiences in working with school leaders,

Each of the first two sections of the evaluation asked experts to rate the format and content of the resource guide using a five-point Likert scale: 1 - Poor, 2 - Fair, 3 - Average, 4 - Good, 5 - Excellent. Table 6 summarizes the mean response score for each of the ratings of the resource guide's format and content by the preliminary field testers. The ratings point out that the experts found the format and content to be somewhere between good and excellent.

**Table 6 Preliminary Field Test Results for the Format and Content of the Resource Guide**

Format of the Handbook	Mean Score
1. Content presented in a logical order	4.6
2. Organization of content	4.8
3. Readability of the text	4.7
4. Appropriate grammar and vocabulary	4.9
5. Overall usability	4.8
<i>Content of the Handbook</i>	
6. Practicality of the handbook	4.0
7. Content based on current research	4.6
8. Relevance of the content	4.7
9. Resource guide provides new information	4.7
10. Overall content quality	4.5

The three parts of the evaluation form included open-ended questions which allowed the experts to provide comments and suggestions for improvement and alterations to the resource guide. The feedback provided during the preliminary field test provided great insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the resource guide.

The narrative feedback provided rich and necessary information. Areas of agreement among the experts were that this topic is extremely important, and it is ever-changing. Several of the responses required the researcher to follow up with an email, telephone call, or a face-to-face visit. These additional visits led to additional clarifications. A face-to-face visit with Dr. Steve

Wycoff led to discussion about what should be done with this resource guide following the conclusion of this dissertation. He suggested the information be set up in a blog-type format. He said, —All of the content is pertinent and important to school leaders. Unfortunately, school leaders are unlikely, for a variety of reasons, to read all of the content. An abbreviated version featuring your key questions and answers would likely be received more positively by school administrators and teachers. As a follow-up I would suggest that you put this online in a blog format where individuals can find your content through Google searches” (S. Wycoff, personal communication, December 29, 2011).

Dr. Wycoff also said, —Through no fault of your own, your topic is a moving target. In fact, it may be the fastest moving target of any topic you could have chosen. The trajectory of social media is amazing, so your challenge is daunting.” He then said, —Finishing your guide on this topic while the information was still pertinent was quite a feat. It will be interesting to see what the shelf life is for your information.” He went on to comment, —You may have been overzealous in your depiction of schools as rapidly changing. I wish your depictions of schools as rapidly changing were true. My observation, unburdened by data, leads me to believe that an extremely small percentage of educators are using social media for educational purposes” (S. Wycoff, personal communication, December 29, 2011). In an attempt to help leaders use it more, Dr. Wycoff invited the researcher to contact him following the completion of the doctorate to work with their in-house website publisher to break this information into smaller pieces and in a blog-type format. The information could then be easily purchased and accessed by school leaders.

Format related comments from the preliminary test are listed in Table 7, and they are followed by content-specific comments in Table 8. Actions taken by the researcher were

described in the *Research Action* column of the table. Three identifiers were used to categorize the research actions: *Agreed*, the research agreed with the recommended change by the expert and a change was made to the resource guide; *Disagreed*, the researcher disagreed with the recommended change by the expert and a reason was given for not making the change to the resource guide; and *Acknowledged*, the researcher acknowledged a comment. The overall data and feedback from this stage helped determine both the strengths and weaknesses of the resource guide.

**Table 7 Preliminary Field Test Format-specific Responses**

Expert Comment	Research Action
I loved your overall organization and format. Although I must tell you this is the first dissertation project that I have read without printing the document and holding it in my hands. It was a unique experience for me to get the overall feel of the document in PDF format.	Acknowledged.
I think it is very well-written.	Acknowledged.
Avoid passive voice when writing.	Agreed. Made several corrections.
No suggestions	Acknowledged.
I thought the writing and format of this resource guide were done in a very organized and easy-to-read format.	Acknowledged.



**Table 8 Preliminary Field Test Content-specific Responses**

Expert Comment	Research Action
All of the content is pertinent and important to school leaders. Unfortunately, school leaders are unlikely, for a variety of reasons, to read all of the content. An abbreviated version featuring your key questions and answers would likely be received more positively by school administrators and teachers. As a follow-up I would suggest that you put this online in a blog format where individuals can find your content through Google searches.	Acknowledged. Will make it more practical in length when I transfer it to a blog. For dissertation purposes, it will stay more detailed.
The research you've included from page 6 to page 12 is great.	Acknowledged.
Mention how Missouri, for a short time, made social media use by teachers with their students illegal.	Agreed. Information concerning the Missouri social media use by educators was included.
Suggest you look into USC Professor Henry Jenkins to learn more about caring adults guiding digital media use.	Agreed. Information studied and included in the digital citizenship section.
All parts of the resource guide are very helpful. A strong part of the resource guide is the specific mentioning of court cases. These cases will assist school leaders in the workings of and use of social media.	Acknowledged.

**Table 9 Preliminary Field Test Strengths of the Resource Guide**

Strengths of the Resource Guide	Research Action
The strength of this resource guide is how well it is documented, along with the examples given. You have made a very thorough discussion of the topic.	Acknowledged.
I love the use of court cases to show trends.	Acknowledged.
Very thorough discussion of the topic.	Acknowledged.
Specific court cases referenced. The three-drawer toolbox system of organization was very easy to understand.	Acknowledged.
The resource guide is the right length. Short enough to keep interest; however, long enough to include much information. Also like the digital citizenship examples.	Acknowledged.

**Table 10 Preliminary Field Test Weaknesses of the Resource Guide**

Weaknesses of the Resource Guide	Research Action
I would like to see you include some more step-by-step facilitation ideas to use social media.	Agreed. A checklist for school leaders was created.
Are you going to cover what to do if a teacher is “set up” by a student? For example, if a student sends a sexually explicit photo by text, should a teacher erase the photo? Notify an administrator?	Agreed. This information was added to the texting section of the resource guide.
You need to include additional information regarding digital citizenship. Digital literacy should be mentioned.	Agreed. Additional content was added in the digital citizenship chapter to include recommended information.
Some of your examples in Chapter 4 seemed unnecessary (the digital citizenship rubric).	Disagreed. Though the examples of digital citizenship may seem unnecessary to this expert, another reader encouraged its inclusion. Decision was made to keep it.
I would like more about the immediacy factor.	Additional comments were added to show the immediate need to welcome social media into P-12 education.

**Table 11 Preliminary Field Test Specific Comments for Information and Pages in the Resource Guide**

Expert Comment	Research Action
You may have been overzealous in your depiction of schools as rapidly changing. I wish that your depictions of schools as rapidly changing were true. My observation, unburdened by data, leads me to believe that an extremely small percentage of educators are using social media for educational purposes.	Acknowledged. This resource guide will be available to those who are willing to use social media in schools. It is not necessarily meant to bring about the use.
Thank you so much for tackling something so important. This truly is the next frontier of education! Plus, from the standpoint of a teacher who loves social media in the classroom, it's great to know there are at least a few folks who support it.	Acknowledged. Appreciated the comments.
I hope you have the time, someday, to add a section on dealing with student misuse and parents going after teachers on Facebook. We often face that problem. We also face the problem with people accessing newspaper forums trashing teachers, especially after a disciplinary action that makes the news.	Acknowledged. Appreciated the comment about future additions, but for the purposes of this project, only staff members were addressed.
I appreciate the opportunity to read and analyze the resource guide. It is very helpful to use, as a principal, as I attempt to establish the direction of policy on social media in our school.	Acknowledged. Appreciate the comment about it helping establish direction for policy on social media in schools.
I am a huge believer in social media use in classrooms. This is an important topic for you to research, and the creation of a resource guide for school leaders is important.	Acknowledged. I agree to the importance of this topic.

### **Step 5. Product Revision**

Data provided in Step 4 directed the revisions of the resource guide. The feedback used to guide these revisions, the formative evaluation, allows researchers to collect data which can then be used to identify needed changes and then to modify the product (Dick & Carey, 2009). Both major and minor changes were made during the investigation and development of the resource guide from Step 1 to Step 6.

Suggestions for changes were heeded when those suggestions fit with research conducted for this resource guide. For example, a change suggested by one field test expert was to mention

how Missouri, for a short time, made social media use by teachers with students illegal. The researcher added information concerning the Missouri social media issue to the resource guide.

Another suggested change was to include additional information from University of Southern California Professor Henry Jenkin's research on caring adults guiding digital media use. This information was added to the digital literacy section of digital citizenship.

Another field test expert recommended a more step-by-step checklist for school leaders to use when facilitating social media use by staff members. A checklist was created as part of the product revision and was shared during the main field test.

Some suggestions made by the field test experts were not heeded. For example, one preliminary field test expert suggested the removal of the digital citizenship examples, but the researcher chose to keep these examples due to the positive comment made by another field tester. The table presenting digital citizenship examples was also kept because of the first research question that guided the creation of this resource guide; —“What information do school leaders need to know to effectively facilitate the use of social media by school staff?” School leaders need to know more about digital citizenship examples to better facilitate social media use by their staff.

Expert field test comments indicating a need to add content about the immediate need for social media use by staff, the call for more inclusion of digital citizenship, and digital literacy, line up with current research on social media use by staff in P-12 schools. Preliminary field test experts appreciated the reference to court cases, and all made mention of how the resource guide was an easy read. Taken as a whole, the preliminary field test experts indicated the resource guide's content was thorough and that the topic was an important one.

## **Step 6. Main Field Test**

The main field test was carried out using the amended version of *A School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media use by School Staff*. Revisions were made based on feedback from Step 4. The basis of the main field test was to gather additional information on the format and content of the handbook. The number of participants set for this next step was five. The main field testers had to meet at least one or more of the following criteria:

1. Be recognized as an expert in the area of social media use in education, or;
2. Be a practitioner, specifically a teacher, presently using social media with P-12 students, or;
3. Be a school leader presently using social media, or;
4. Be an individual who was nominated by one of the experts from the Preliminary Field Test phase.

Main field testers included Mrs. Deb Wiens, Mr. Bill Burkhead, Mr. Thomas Sextro, Dr. Bill Hagerman, and Dr. John Heim. Table 12 includes the qualifications of the main field testers. As mentioned earlier, the researcher chose to include one local practitioner in both the preliminary and main field test steps to insure local understanding and benefit to doing this research.

**Table 12 Main Field Testers**

Name	Qualifications
Deb Wiens	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Maize South Middle School Computer Applications Teacher (Maize, Kansas)</li><li>2. Practitioner presently using social media with her middle school journalism students</li></ol>
Bill Burkhead	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Plymouth North High School Principal (Plymouth, Massachusetts)</li><li>2. School leader presently using social media with his high school students</li></ol>
Thomas Sextro	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Technology Director for Holton, Kansas School District</li><li>2. Expert and state/national presenter on education technology.</li><li>3. Published articles in <i>eSchool News Publication</i> on school technology and best practices in the area of Internet use</li></ol>
Dr. Bill Hagerman	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Superintendent of Nickerson, Kansas School District</li><li>2. Nominated by Steve Wycoff from the Preliminary Field Test</li></ol>
Dr. John Heim	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Executive Director of Kansas Association of School Boards</li><li>2. Nominated by Steve Wycoff from the Preliminary Field Test</li></ol>

All chosen participants were provided the main field test instructions (see Appendix I) along with an informed consent form (see Appendix F). Similar to the preliminary field test evaluation, this main field test evaluation had three sections (see Appendix J). Section one dealt with the format of the school leader’s resource guide. The second section dealt with the content of the guide, while the last section dealt with the experts’ specific comments and notes about the actual handbook.

**Table 13 Main Field Test Results for the Format and Content of the Resource Guide**

Format of the Handbook	Mean Score
1. Content presented in a logical order	4.8
2. Organization of content	5.0
3. Readability of the text	4.8
4. Appropriate grammar and vocabulary	4.8
5. Overall usability	4.6
<i>Content of the Handbook</i>	
6. Practicality of the handbook	4.6
7. Content based on current research	4.8
8. Relevance of the content	5.0
9. Resource guide provides new information	4.8
10. Overall content quality	5.0

The three parts of the evaluation form, as in the preliminary field test, included open-ended questions which allowed the experts to provide comments and suggestions for improvement and alterations to the resource guide. The feedback provided during the main field test provided additional insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the resource guide.

Table 13 shows the results of the Main Field Test for the Format and Content of the Resource Guide. In comparing the Main Field Test results to the Preliminary Field Test results, almost all areas increased. The greatest increase from the Preliminary Field Test to the Main Field test came in three areas that received an increased score up to a 5.0: organization of content, relevance of content, and overall content quality.

Two areas went down slightly. First, “Overall Usability” dropped from 4.8 to 4.6, related to comments by both the Preliminary and Main Field Testers who had reservations about this resource guide being created in a paper format versus an online format. Secondly, “Appropriate

grammar and vocabulary went down one point. The researcher does not have any comments to explain this one point decrease.

Format related comments from the main test are listed in Table 14, followed by content-specific comments in Table 15. Actions taken by the researcher were described in the *Research Action* column of the table. Three identifiers were used to categorize the research actions:

*Agreed*, the research agreed with the recommended change by the expert and a change was made to the resource guide; *Disagreed*, the researcher disagreed with the recommended change by the expert and a reason was given for not making the change to the resource guide; and

*Acknowledged*, the researcher acknowledged a comment. The overall data and feedback from this stage helped determine both the strengths and weaknesses of the resource guide.

**Table 14 Main Field Test Format-specific Responses**

Expert Comment	Research Action
I like the <del>Key</del> "Key Answers for School Leaders" section at the end of each chapter. I do find the textbox cramped and difficult to read. I might also suggest having a separate appendix for ALL <del>Key</del> "Key Answers" so leaders could use it as a pull-out resource.	Agreed. Appendix D was created in the resource guide.
Use more space. Text boxes in all charts are full, which makes it very busy and difficult to read easily. Maybe the use of colors, graphs and photos may help <del>break</del> "things up."	Agreed. All text boxes were changed to more space.
I honestly do not have any suggestions. I felt the author did a great job of explaining terms and the subject matter as a whole.	Acknowledged.
This guide has considerable text within it – in some cases several pages of text in one passage or section. This makes the usability more difficult in my opinion. If I am looking for some section that is specific to an issue I have to get to your Figures that give me a summary of what has just been said regarding my issue. Those Figures, on the other hand, do exactly what they should. They help summarize and give brief re-statements of key points. Overall however, this guide is very well written.	Acknowledged. Will make it more practical in length when I transfer it to a blog format. For dissertation purposes, it will stay more detailed.
I am not sure I have any additional suggestions for making the text more understandable. You have done a nice job of defining terms and making sure the readers know enough about the topic you are describing.	Acknowledged.



The use of the three drawer toolbox was a great visual for the guide. I would, however, have liked to have seen the toolbox referred to more throughout the rest of the guide. The author could maybe do this by giving an example of a case study and then tying that example back to the toolbox.	Agreed. Case studies tied to the toolbox were added in additional areas.
The content is excellent! Some help from a graphic designer might enhance the readability of the charts.	Agreed. A graphic designer will be utilized if the resource guide is published.
Text is very good. The figures and charts were difficult for me to grasp. I think the use of court cases and examples makes the issue more real for the reader.	Agreed. Changes were made to the tables and figures.

**Table 15 Main Field Test Content-specific Responses**

Expert Comment	Research Action
If I had to pick a section most useful, content-wise, I think it would depend on why someone might be using a guide like this in the first place. If a leader had an issue of policy regarding some behavior etc., then that section is a very helpful summary of research, cases that might be relevant, and what could be done. However, if a school leader is trying to lead change in the area of technology integration, student engagement in their own learning, the appropriate use of social media, etc., then those sections are very helpful. So, I think the usefulness depends.  As far as what might be the least helpful, again it depends.	Acknowledged.
The key questions and answers are helpful to school leaders. These can be used as a “quick” reference guide for them. All of the individual case examples do a nice job of bringing the “real world” into the guide.	Acknowledged.
I like the case studies. Excellent discussion starters and education on laws are vital to understand. I found everything included to be useful in educating and informing staff.	Acknowledged.
There is a definite need for guidance for employees in schools on the topic of social media.	Acknowledged.
I think this whole guide would be useful to school leaders and their staffs.	Acknowledged.

**Table 16 Main Field Test Strengths of the Resource Guide**

Expert Comment	Research Action
I think a key strength of this guide is how thorough it is. Nearly every topic that I have encountered on the subject of social media use, etc., is discussed in some measure. I also think that the Figures Summary sections are very helpful, and I think that for any Kansas educator, you have referenced enough “local research” and sources to make this guide very relevant.	Acknowledged.
This guide encourages the use of social media in the classroom! It was nice to see all the benefits social media can do for students and staff when used appropriately. It was also nice to be told it is acceptable to use social media with students instead of always seeing Access Denied! I also felt the author did an excellent job of introducing and discussing several forms of social media.	Acknowledged.
Identifies, researches, explains and offers solutions to an extremely relevant trend in education. Each chapter could be used independently as a resource.	Acknowledged.
It is comprehensive, relevant, and easy to use.	Acknowledged.
There is a definite need for this type of resource for school leaders.	Acknowledged.

**Table 17 Main Field Test Weaknesses of the Resource Guide**

Expert Comment	Research Action
<p>I am not sure that this is a weakness as much as it is a reality of this topic. As Dr. Wyckoff noted, <del>“this is a fast moving target.”</del> In order for this guide to stay relevant and current, the best way may be for this whole guide to become more of a Wiki, or some other digital media, rather than a static printed guide. By the time this guide gets to print, things will have happened that will significantly affect what might have been said.</p>	<p>Acknowledged. The researcher agrees this information will be more useful when put into a blog or Wiki type of format. Again, for dissertation purposes, it will stay in the current format.</p>
<p>None!</p>	<p>Acknowledged.</p>
<p>The title indicates <del>“facilitation of social media use,”</del> and after reading the complete document I found there was a tone set by explaining the various laws that social media is high risk. Although there is risk, a newcomer to this document might be more inclined to not use social media, than open the floodgates – maybe more emphasis on the positive?</p>	<p>Disagreed. This guide was not created to encourage or discourage a school leader from facilitating social media use. It was simply created to provide information if a school leader chooses to facilitate social media use with his staff.</p>
<p>It may be too long, although the question and answer summary format helps with this. There are a lot of <del>“personal communications”</del> references, though given the content this may be necessary to remain current.</p>	<p>Acknowledged.</p>
<p>No comment.</p>	

**Table 18 Main Field Test Specific Comments for Information in the Resource Guide.**

Expert Comment	Research Action
Suggested a different word be used on pages 36 and 89.	Agreed. Made changes.
I like the toolbox metaphor, and believed it makes a complicated topic easier to understand.	Acknowledged.
I believe this document could act as an excellent resource for staff development and college courses. The research was well-done and connected well to information presented.	Acknowledged.
I appreciated the comments made about the necessity of leaders to have a “vision” on page 17.	Acknowledged.
Did believe there was necessary, but strong discussion on the negatives of social networking (termination). I would suggest confining concerns to one chapter, and making the remainder a pro-social media use document.	Disagreed. This guide was not created to encourage or discourage a school leader from facilitating social media use. It was simply created to provide information if a school leader chooses to facilitate social media use with his staff.
I thoroughly enjoyed the document and will use it as a resource and reference in my work as an administrator. Nice job, Deanna!	Acknowledged and appreciated.
Reference to a “conservative” judge on page 23 seems subjective.	Agreed. Removed the word “conservative.”
Table on page 46 is particularly hard to digest.	Agreed. Removed the table and replaced it with a succinct narrative.

The feedback gathered through the evaluations provided extensive information for the researcher to use to improve the resource guide. They liked the toolbox metaphor, and one mentioned that it should be referenced more often along with the case studies. One main field tester suggested that the researcher elicit the help of a graphic designer, and the researcher plans on taking this suggestion if the resource guide is published. The suggestion was taken to add more space to certain sections. This made the content easier to read.

The main field testers all agreed there is a need for this type of resource guide. They also referenced the thoroughness and relevance of the resource guide. They appreciated the key questions (points to ponder) and answers along with the case studies and court case references.

Weaknesses mentioned by the main field testers included the difficulty of keeping this resource guide current in response to the rapidly changing world of social media, the tone of the guide being somewhat cautious about the use of social media, and the occasional use of personal communications as a source of information. All of the weaknesses were acknowledged or defended by the researcher. Specific comments shared by the main field testers were responded to by making specific recommended changes or by being justified by the researcher. The researcher changed a few words, as recommended by the main field testers, and removed a table which confused another tester. The table was one which received no positive comments, and it was not directly referenced by one of the research objectives.

Several of the preliminary and main field testers indicated they enjoyed reading the resource guide, and many indicated they shared the resource guide with their colleagues. Dr. John Heim, the Executive Director of the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) indicated that the resource guide was done very well. He also communicated to the researcher that it was a much needed product. He invited the researcher to present the finished product at one of KASB's future seminars.

The main field test experts' comments found the resource guide to be useful, thorough, and timely. The feedback gained from this step provided necessary information in the overall usability of the resource guide for its intended audience. Table 12 indicates the mean response score for each of the ratings of the resource guide's format and content by the main field testers. The ratings point out that the main field testers found the format and content to be from good to

excellent, and the mean scores in the main field test are higher than those of the preliminary test mean scores in eight of the ten categories.

### **Step 7. Final Product Revision and Dissemination**

Additional revisions of the guide were made based on the feedback offered by the readers in the main field test. This second revision, like the first product revision in Step 5, helped produce a more user-friendly resource guide.

The final results of this study led to the production of *A School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of School Media Use by School Staff*. Each of the needs assessment/proof of concept experts, the preliminary field test reviewers, and the main field test reviewers received a copy of the revised resource guide.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher recognized that she would bring her own experience to this study. Along with her experience she brought her perspective which was greatly influenced by her role as a school district's human resources director. The experiences gained while being a human resources director strongly supported the need for more resources for school leaders to help guide them through the ever-changing world of social media. The resource guide needed to be practical and usable by the evaluators and practitioners who helped with this research and development process. While experiences shaped this researcher, there remained a strong commitment to allow the responses and evaluations by the participants to guide the creation and revisions made to the resource guide.

### **Summary**

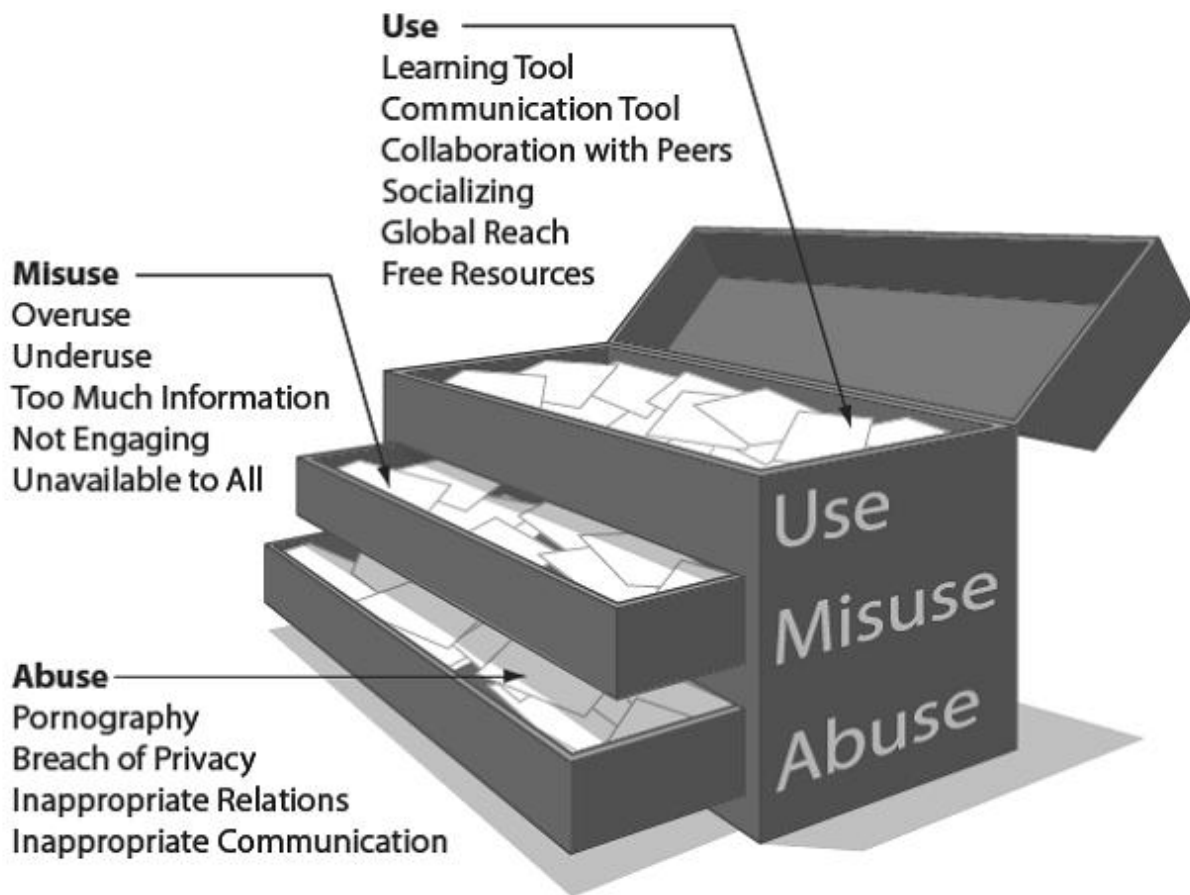
The research and development process described in this chapter were used to guide production and assessment of the end product: *A School Leader's Resource Guide for the*

*Facilitation of School Media Use by School Staff.* This outlined, systematic process provided needed input from a diverse group of leaders and practitioners in the fields of education, educational law, and technology. The information gathered from the extensive literature review, needs assessment/proof of concept, preliminary and main field tests, took an area of critical need all the way to the creation of a product the field testers indicated would be useful for school leaders.

## Chapter 4 - Validated Product

### School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff

By Deanna L. Gooch  
2012





## **Introduction**

The purpose of this resource is to guide school leaders through the potentially rough waters of helping school staff members use social media appropriately and responsibly. Existing guides focus more on the actual implementation of social media use in P-12 education, and the use of social media by students, while this resource guide is focused on assisting school leaders in their quest to help all staff members use social media properly.

As a classroom teacher, assistant principal, curriculum director, and now as a human resources director, this author understands the need for this type of practical and easy-to-use material. This resource guide addresses how social media should be used responsibly by staff members. At times, school leaders may find themselves in a quandary as to when and if they should get involved. School leaders do have the right to get involved when staff members are using social media inappropriately. With this in mind, a simple three-drawer toolbox metaphor will be used to illustrate the use, misuse, or potential abuse opportunities which face staff members when navigating through the social media world in which they and their students reside. The goal of this resource guide is to help leaders feel secure in their abilities to know when they should get involved, and how to facilitate the appropriate use of social media by their staff members.

The first chapter of this guide defines what social media is, along with a short history of how this powerful communication source came to be. Next, the growing use is discussed along with why the growth will likely continue to increase over time. The influx of social media use by students makes it an obvious tool to use to help students learn, and many examples of how this is being done will be shared. With that in mind, teachers will need to be adept at using social media properly, and school leaders will need to be ready to insure it is appropriately used.

The underlying goals the reader will find throughout this guide are to keep the information simple, usable, and pragmatic. School leaders are busy people, and busy people need succinct tools that they can understand and apply. In practice, this author has seen the need to make things usable and easy to understand. Each chapter begins with points to ponder, and these points to ponder are addressed at the end of each chapter. The toolbox illustration is used as a metaphor to illustrate the proper *uses* of social media, potential *misuses* of social media, or obvious *abuses* of social media. Each level of use will be placed into a toolbox metaphor with *use* being a *top-drawer* idea, *misuse* being a *middle-drawer* concept, and an *abuse* relegated to a *bottom-drawer* action.

Chapter 2 describes the ways in which social media should be used properly by school staff in P-12 education. School leaders must understand how to facilitate the appropriate use of social media. They must make certain their staff members know how to responsibly use social media both during and after school hours, both on and off campus. The areas covered are constitutional issues including privacy concerns, free speech issues, and censorship. These hot topics evolve over time with the increased use of social media; therefore, this resource guide incorporates a space at the end to note any more recent legal decisions and further developments.

Next, chapter 3 encourages school leaders to use social media. Social media has its challenges, but it can be an important teaching and learning tool for both teachers and students. School leaders themselves have a great opportunity to develop their own knowledge and expertise by becoming adept users of social media.

A discussion of proper social media use would not be complete without including the work done by Dr. Gerald Bailey and Dr. Mike Ribble concerning digital citizenship. Chapter 4 shares the basic information all school leaders need to know about this important area.

Chapter 5 shares some of the emerging issues and challenges which are associated with using social media in schools. Those issues include the future of online socializing and the case for social media in schools. Chapter 5 also includes a checklist designed for school leaders to use in facilitating social media use by their staff.

The final chapter, chapter 6, presents information on employer's rights and policies. Several court cases are discussed, along with specific steps employers should take when they suspect a misuse or abuse of technology has occurred. The resource guide is brought to a close by sharing some basic advice on ways social media should be used.

The development of this guide was done with the help of school law experts, Dr. Robert Shoop, author and professor at Kansas State University (KSU), Donna Whiteman, Assistant Executive Director for the Kansas Association of School Boards, and Marjorie Blaufuss, Kansas National Education Association Staff Attorney. Other contributors were social media experts, Ginger Lewman, Director of the f2f Program, Dr. Steve Wycoff, Chief Innovation Officer, both from the Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas, Anne Collier, Editor of NetFamilyNews.org and Co-Director of ConnectSafely.org, and Thomas Sextro, Technology Director for the Holton, Kansas School District. Dr. Rosemary Talab, technology instructor for the College of Education at KSU, and Dr. Cyndi Danner-Kuhns, Technology for Teaching and Learning instructor at KSU, both provided the author numerous excellent resources.

Additional experts included digital citizenship experts Dr. Gerald Bailey and Dr. Mike Ribble. And finally, practitioners who use social media in P-12 education provided important insight into the use of social media by staff. Those practitioners included Shelly Walston, Journalism Teacher at Maize South High School, and Deb Wiens, Computer Applications

Teacher at Maize South Middle School, both in Maize, Kansas. Building-level principals who contributed to the research were Bob Mellon, Clearwater High School Principal in Clearwater, Kansas, and Bill Burkhead, Plymouth North High School Principal in Plymouth, Massachusetts. A district-level perspective was shared by Dr. Bill Hagerman, Superintendent of Schools at Nickerson, Kansas, and Dr. John Heim, the Executive Director of Kansas Association of School Boards provided an invaluable perspective from the state level.

### **Who Should Use this Resource Guide?**

This resource guide is written for any school leader needing to learn more about social media and how to encourage its proper use by all school staff members. It is also a helpful resource for anyone interested in ways to use digital opportunities to help students learn without causing legal or ethical problems for staff members.

### **How Should You Use this Resource Guide?**

This guide is written so that the readers can read it from start to finish, or they can go directly to the section which best meets their current needs or concerns. Numerous web-based resources are shared throughout the resource guide, and a list of references is located at the end of each chapter. The points to ponder at the beginning of each chapter, followed by responses to those points to ponder at the end of each chapter, provide an actual staff development tool school leaders could use to help make certain they understand how to facilitate the use of social media by staff members effectively. There is also a checklist provide for school leaders to use when facilitating social media use with their staff. (See Resource Guide - Appendix C)

## Resource Guide - Chapter 1 - Social Media

### Points to Ponder for School Leaders Concerning Social Media

1. What is social media?
2. How is it used by students, teachers and school leaders?
3. Why do school leaders need to know about the use of social media in schools?
4. Give an example of appropriate use of social media by school staff members.
5. Describe an instance when social media might be misused by school staff members.
6. Name an example of how social media can be abused by school staff members.

### *The Definition of Social Media*

What exactly is social media? Social media has many similar definitions. Enter the words “social” and “media” into a Google search, as of the fall of 2011, and the resulting number of hits will be more than 6 million. A definition this author chose was one actually found on a marketing website entitled *30 Social Media Definitions*. “Social media is digital content and interaction that is created by and between people” (Cohen, May 2011, p. 1). Many definitions were more detailed, but this one most succinctly describes the focus of the researcher. This definition focuses on what social media is, yet it does not place limits on what it can be.

This resource guide was developed to help school leaders facilitate the use of technology as a means of communicating and learning inside and outside the school environment. The word “social” implies the sharing of information that involves networking, and the word “media” insinuates the use of technology.

### *Increased Use by Students, Teachers and School Leaders*

Students feel as much at home using social media as they do listening to their favorite music. While most school districts across the nation still block social media (Davis, 2010), an

increasing number of more courageous schools are seeing the benefits of incorporating it. For example, Eric C. Sheninger, the principal at New Milford High School in New Jersey, uses an official school Facebook page, and he tweets and blogs with the students, staff and parents at his school. He and many others have gone from being skeptics about the presence of social media in schools (due to concerns about privacy and inappropriate behavior) to becoming strong advocates for its use, due to its amazing capability to engage students (Ferriter, Ramsden, & Sheninger, 2011).

Many schools dealing with budget cuts at a level not experienced in the history of public education are embracing these communication tools because, for the most part, they are free. In addition, though the use of social media was once looked upon as a fad for the very young, it appears to be here to stay. There is no time like the present to begin figuring out how to use this new media appropriately, strategically and wisely, so those in the education field will be ready when the social media generation starts bringing their children to kindergarten—and before site founders and advertisers figure out a way to start charging for all these free tools” (Carr, 2010, p. 35).

A study by the Washington-based *Pew Research Center’s Internet and American Life Project* released in 2010 found that 73 percent of Americans ages 12 to 17 use social-networking websites, up from 55 percent in 2006. This 18 percent jump in ten years is not expected to slow down (Anderson & Rainie, 2010). Defending this prediction, Steve Hargadon, the creator of the 42,000-member Classroom 2.0 network on Ning (the world’s largest platform for creating social websites), says “Social networking is not going to go away” (Davis, 2010, p. 16). He believes “These [social network tools] are so powerful in terms of learning” (p. 18).

In Trussville, Alabama, the school district has completely opened up the filters. Instead of getting the message, “Access Denied,” its students are free to use YouTube videos (a popular video-sharing website that lets anyone upload videos for private or public viewing), and to participate in Internet chats with peers around the world or with award-winning authors. They are even allowed to have blogging sessions and do Web research using search engines as open as Google. This 4,100-student district near Birmingham is known for its technology and practices this belief by teaching its students 21<sup>st</sup>-century values as they provide instruction on digital citizenship and appropriate use of all social media.

“Instead of blocking the many exit ramps and side routes on the information superhighway, they have decided that educating students and teachers on how to navigate the Internet’s vast resources responsibly, safe, and productively—and setting clear rules and expectations for doing so—is the best way to head off online collisions” (Manzo, 2009, p. 11). Many forward-thinking districts like Trussville exist in the United States, and it would behoove those who put up detour signs all around the information superhighway to learn from Trussville and others like them, or their students will certainly be left behind.

It follows that since the students are living in this social-media-rich world, teachers will need to go there with them. Not only will teachers need to go where the students are, but these educators will also benefit by taking advantage of the considerable opportunities for collaboration that social media avail. Social media tools allow teachers to connect one-to-one and even one-to-many in such relevant ways that they may finally find professional development that will truly help them. Using new social media tools, like using any tool, requires some training, some exposure to various ways to use it, and some time to practice in order to develop a high level of comfort and expertise.

Teachers are using these technologies more and more. In the February 2010 issue of *eSchool News*, Maya Prabhu presents findings from a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) survey released January 5, 2010. The survey results were compiled by Grunwald Associates, an education research group, and the survey, “Digitally Inclined,” was the first to include information collected from pre-K educators. The PBS has been conducting this educators’ media use survey annually since 2002.

Indications from the 2010 survey:

- 76 percent of P-12 educators said they used social media in the classroom (up from 69 percent in 2008),
- 80 percent indicated they were frequent or regular users, while only 33 percent of the pre-K educators indicated they were frequent or regular users,
- P-12 teachers were accessing video online more, with 72 percent saying they streamed or downloaded content from the Internet (up from 65 percent in 2008), with only 29 percent of the pre-K educators indicating use,
- 25 percent of P-12 educators indicated that they belong to an online community created specifically for teachers as well as to social networking sites. Results were similar for pre-K teachers.

As the use of social media in schools continues to increase, school leaders need to become well-versed on the use of social media in the school setting so they are able to guide and encourage its use. They must understand the educational benefits of these learning tools, as well as recognize and appreciate their legal and ethical aspects. School leaders need to be cognizant of the overall Web 2.0 world and all that it offers and not get tied up in the minutia of how each tool works, since the social media world appears to truly function by Moore’s Law. Moore’s



Law has changed a bit since Gordon E. Moore, the co-founder of Intel, first stated in an article that the “complexity of minimum cost semiconductor components had been doubling once a year, every year, since the first prototype microchip had been produced six years before” (Garreau, 2005, p. 49). By 2005, Garreau’s contemporary version of Moore’s Law had “come to be stated this way: The power of information technology will double every 18 months, for as far as the eye can see” (p. 49).

Moore’s Law makes it imperative for a leader in education to understand the overarching need to embrace technology use in a macro way, and to lead a staff in ways that make change and technology as comfortable and flexible as possible. There needs to be a sense of immediacy in school leaders concerning the understanding and proper use of social media by their staff members.

***The need for school leaders to facilitate its use***

In his blog (a Website that contains an online personal journal with comments, reflections, and often hyperlinks), Jonathon Martin shared an article entitled *11 Ways Schools Can Be Relevant, Compelling and Effective in the Coming Transformational Years* (2011). He shares important ideas on how to keep brick-and-mortar schools more vital and viable. His article suggests the following eleven guidelines as ways schools must increasingly embrace technology and innovation:

1. Become more accountable by using the right kind of data: Schools of choice are here, and parents and their students, as stakeholders, are making their choices based on data and measures of accountability. Publicized data will need to include more than nationally normed test results or state assessment scores. Alumni tracking, climate and student engagement surveys will need to be provided to education consumers

(both parents and students) in ways that are authentic and attractive. Many districts are using dynamic and eye-catching digital portfolios to meet this goal.

2. Ensure safe, welcoming, connected and caring school communities: Gone are the days when schools can look like warehouses for students. Gone are the days when students would continue to come to schools where they did not feel safe and engaged in their learning. The schools of the past existed as a monopoly of sorts, and today's schools are no longer able to force children to attend them when those same students have the options of connecting online or to home school. Martin refers to Daniel Pink's idea that successful schools in the coming years will be "blended high-tech/high-touch school models" (Pink, 2006, p. 51). These schools need to be learning communities where students feel valued and are treated with dignity. He then quotes David Brooks, author of *The Social Animal*: "One of a successful student's key skills in school is his ability to bond with teachers. We've spent a generation trying to reorganize schools to make them better, but the truth is that people learn from the people they love" (Brooks, 2011, as cited by Martin, 2011).
3. Engage meaningfully: If students do not see a reason to go to school today to learn, they will not be going to school tomorrow. They have too many other options of where they can learn. Middle and upper-middle-class school leaders have lessons to learn from those who have been working diligently in inner-city schools to curb dropout rates. Many of these dropout reduction attempts have worked amazingly well. For example, CART: Center for Advanced Research and Technology, located in Fresno, California, focuses on developing engaging project-based learning into all they do, and has reduced its drop-out rates from 50 percent to 5 percent. Educators

have much to learn from anti-dropout experts: make learning meaningful; make it project-based so students can make, fix, create, solve real problems, and they will keep coming back.

4. Affirm socializing: “We might think that student time is best spent in class, focusing exclusively on schoolwork, but if we don’t honor their deep and innately human need for social experiences, we will only drive them out of our schools to other options. I hate to say it, but if Facebook and other social media are an integral part of their social lives, forbidding it from their lives for six to ten hours a day only increase students’ motivation to redirect their education to venues which tolerate their social desires” (Martin, 2011, p. 1).
5. Welcome digital tools: Students see how almost all professionals now use digital tools (such as mobile devices and laptops) and social media in their everyday work. How disappointing it must be then to come to a school where these same tools and options are disallowed. Students should be using tools in the school setting the same ways they will be required to do so in their work environment. This, again, will include all types of technological tools as well as social media. Schools of the future will have students who “learn by doing, vigorously, digitally” (Martin, 2011).
6. Open the networks: Tom Friedman, author of *The World is Flat*, agrees with President Barack Obama that nothing is more important to our society’s future than that our young people are able to be problem solvers in order to address societal challenges, to be innovators, to be creative enough to come up with needed solutions. The author of *Where Good Ideas Come From*, Steven Johnson, and the curator of Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED), Chris Anderson, agree and argue

passionately that these innovative minds will be cultivated most effectively by making certain that our students are networked digitally. When our students are digitally networked, they will be more easily able to stimulate each other's ideas, to inform and motivate each other. Stifling and limiting the primary ways students share information (i.e. by watching videos posted on Facebook or YouTube) will not encourage their educational relevance and effectiveness. Opening the networks will increase the relevance and effectiveness of education.

7. Employ video: Referring to video on Facebook or YouTube, Chris Anderson, of TED, contends that watching video is almost archetypal in that it takes one back to campfire and storytelling. Our genes are ingrained to accept and appreciate this. Watching video can often help a student more than simply reading a text. Even more importantly, creating videos can encourage a student to learn more deeply. Crafting video helps students prepare for their future. Writing, speaking and digital video communication must join together to be the "trinity of communication essentials" (Martin, 2011).
8. Include gaming: The U.S. military, many corporations, and some medical practices use gaming. In *A Whole New Mind*, Daniel Pink writes, "For a generation of people, games have become a tool for solving problems as well as a vehicle for self-expression and self-exploration" (Pink, 2006, p. 192). He continues that the current generation has woven video games into their lives much as their predecessors did television. He writes, "For example, according to several surveys, the percentage of American college students who say they've played video games is 100" (Pink, 2006,

- p. 192). The schools that best figure out how to use gaming relevantly will have a huge advantage over those who refuse to consider the use of gaming in education.
9. Provide digitally adaptive skill development: Martin does not want computers to replace teachers, and he reminds the reader that “~~or~~ teachers must become more important rather than less in the way they connect with and care for students” (Martin, 2011, p. 6). He argues that in order to compete effectively with online academies, teachers will need to integrate the best tools available into their classrooms. Digital tools enhance learning, while the teacher provides inspiration, coaching and counseling every day. Computer-adaptive testing helps a teacher assess a student’s learning needs quickly and facilitates needed differentiation. Martin also quotes Shelly Blake-Pollock, who wrote, “~~In~~ ten years, the teacher who hasn’t yet figured out how to use tech to personalize learning will be the teacher out of a job” (Blake-Pollock, 2009, p. 1).
10. Use online, open-source textbooks: If students are to be lifelong learners, they will need to know how to use more than antiquated, paper-hogging textbooks. Online, open-sourced textbooks will provide students with ever-changing, relevant information. Teachers will be able to “~~urate~~” their textbooks to suit their specific curricula needs and teaching styles, and, most importantly, students’ learning requirements. Districts will need to move from buying print textbooks to acquiring customizable digital resources.
11. Support our educators in becoming growth-mindset, networked, online learners and creators: If educators are to become teachers in this digital age, they will first need to make certain they are themselves learners in the digital age. Professional Learning

Networks, or PLNs, are powerful tools to help all educators collaborate, share and network. No longer must a teacher be alone in a classroom filled with students, with only herself to depend upon to discover and incorporated the best practices. The same teacher who may have had to be a “silo” educator in the past may not be part of Facebook, Twitter, Ning, LinkedIn, or a number of other wonderful Web 2.0 tools that will only make the ability to reach each student that much more possible. A teacher may not become a professional development expert, but he will be able to engage these tools from the comfort of a classroom, a home, or even an outdoor venue. The challenge for some, as they go through this transformation, may be that they find themselves on the outside of the group of the old-guard veterans, although this being on the outside will very likely be short lived. “For the majority of schools, however, choosing to refuse this agenda is choosing to become obsolete: neither relevant to the educational options selectors (both parents and students) will select, nor more effective in preparing students for our information age transformed society” (Martin, 2011, p. 8).

Many overarching reasons to begin, or to continue, integrating the use of social media exist. In the December/January 2009-10 edition of *Learning and Leading with Technology*, Lotta Larson, Teresa Miller, and Mike Ribble share *5 Considerations for Digital Age Leaders*. Their five considerations are aligned with National Education Technology Standards (NETS) for Administrators, as found in the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

1. Visionary leadership: Larson, Miller and Ribble (2009) point out that —proactive vision is crucial for lasting and effective technology integration” (p. 13). All of the leaders in a district, including administrators, instructional technology staff and

teacher leaders need to have a common vision of where their technology plan is directed. Without this vision, the district will not be able to move forward.

Superintendents, as well as building principals, must develop and support this vision.

They must champion the exploration of effective social media use by their staff in order to benefit their students.

2. Digital age learning culture: The authors explain the dramatic ways teaching and learning have changed over the past ten years. The role of the teacher has become one of being ~~able~~ to connect to their students' digital worlds to engage and motivate a new and very different type of learner" (p. 13). They mention a quotation by Mortimer Zuckerman, Editor in Chief of *U.S. News and World Report*, when he envisioned the teacher's role as being an enhancer who facilitates students learning by helping them understand the information they receive electronically. The article's authors also ask school leaders to consider some difficult questions, acknowledging the tightrope those leaders attempt to walk in this new age of high-stakes testing: ~~Is~~ it OK to block off significant amounts of time for test preparation at the expense of time to use digital tools?" And ~~How~~ can a new, shared vision help us rethink what a typical classroom should look like?" (p. 14).
3. Systemic improvement: Digital-age leaders at all levels must consider technology in their districts with a systems approach. They need to pay attention to how technology is being used and whether it is doing what it was intended to do, and continuously work to make sure its use is aligned with the vision the district set.
4. Excellence in professional practice: The goal of professional development should be to train the staff to ~~promote~~ technology use not as playing with gadgets, but as

- accessing tools to make educators and learning more effective at motivating, engaging and preparing students for their futures” (p. 15). The planning of these professional-growth opportunities must fit seamlessly with the district’s vision. The authors also delve into practical ways districts, large and small, resource-rich or not, might offer practical, continuous support for their staffs. Some examples they offer include moving teachers through a tiered, skill-level system, or providing them useful incentives. (Teachers are given digital cameras to use if they agree to learn about using digital photography in their classrooms.) They also offer an idea, which fits well with this research to —use blogs, wikis, or course management systems, such as Moodle, to create and share courses or information with teachers” (p. 15). They encourage school leaders to be creative in ways to get teachers more time to practice using the aforementioned ideas, and point out that the ways to provide professional development are as numerous and as necessary as is the creativity of school leaders.
5. Digital citizenship: References made to this in *5 Considerations for Digital Age Leaders* focus on the role of the school leader to initiate conversations with their faculties about the appropriate uses of technology. Handing out Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and requiring each staff member to sign a copy is not enough. School leaders must lead by example and should exemplify what ISTE is saying: —that all users in a district should understand the social, ethical, and legal issues and responsibilities related to technology” (p. 15). The authors reference the ISTE book, *Digital Citizenship in Schools* by Gerald Bailey and Mike Ribble, which identifies nine themes users may consider, helping them break down digital citizenship into understandable components. This is an excellent book to use to facilitate



conversations about digital citizenship with staff and students alike. It gets people reflecting about their own uses of technology.

Student achievement, as well as student behavior, can be affected by providing more engaging technology into the hands of the student. In the August 2010 *eSchool News*, an article entitled *The Keys to Ed-Tech Success* was written with the premise that “Schools with one-to-one computing programs have fewer discipline problems, lower dropout rates, and higher rates of college attendance than schools with a higher ratio of students to computers, according to the results of a major new study” (Devaney, August 2010, p. 28). The major new study was prepared by Project RED (Revolutionizing Education), a national initiative that seeks to prove that, when done properly, investing in technology can increase student achievement and will lead to financial savings for schools and local governments. Devaney writes, “Leadership and vision are two essential components in technological implementation, the study found, and while all schools can benefit from technology, the study shows that “when principals receive specialized training . . . the benefits increase even more” (p. 28).

Devaney’s study added something quite specific to this research. “Sixty-five percent of responding schools that use social media saw a drop in disciplinary action, versus 56 percent of schools not using social media” (p. 29). The author found that 52 percent of the schools saw a lowering of dropout rates, whereas a smaller number (37 percent) of schools that did not use social media saw a dropout rate decrease. Networked students feel like they belong to an environment where people listen to (or read) their ideas. Social media engages students, and engaged students are more likely to stay in schools.

Providing visionary leadership for staff, engaging learners, preparing students for the technological world in which they live, and even helping to lower dropout rates are just a few of

the many reasons school leaders must embrace social media and its appropriate use by students and staff members, as well as by themselves. This section exemplified the fact that a need for a school leader's resource guide for the facilitation of social media in schools exists by showing how frequently students, staff and school leaders are using it. The review of literature also shows that the use of social media allows teachers to connect one-to-one and even one-to-many in ways that would impact professional development. The next section of this literature review describes the ways social media is being used in the P-12 educational system.

***The Toolbox Metaphor: Use, Misuse and Abuse***

The toolbox metaphor will be used as a practical approach for school leaders to draw upon when considering social media use by school staff members. This particular toolbox comprises three drawers. (See Figure 1)

The top drawer represents —top drawer” ideas, those that an educator could use, and perhaps should use. These social media uses are ones that are not only legal and ethical, but will also lead to student engagement and learning. They could also be those uses that bring about effective staff development or help communicate with parents and other stakeholders in a student's education. This is the —use” drawer. For example, principals can easily connect with other school leaders by reaching out for ideas using social media. Twitter (a popular instant messaging system that lets a person send a brief text message) is used extensively by Principal Eric Sheninger, the principal at New Milford High School in New Jersey. Using Twitter to showcase what his school is doing has helped his district gain international attention. —In the past we operated in a vacuum," he says, but now, "you have major organizations and some of the best researchers in the field on Twitter, and that starts more conversations about improving

professional practice. Without Twitter we would not have gotten attention from those stakeholders" (Shein, 2012, p. 39).

The second, or ~~middle~~ "middle drawer," ideas are those that may or may not be appropriate or useful, depending on the specifics of the use. For example, some social media use on topics may or may not be appropriate due to the age of the student. There may also be concerns with the potential volatility of the subject, or even the attitude of a particular region or culture. This is potentially the ~~misuse~~ "misuse" drawer. A specific misuse of social media occurs when school leaders are closed off from learning about the benefits of social media. When administrators were asked, ~~How do you use Social Media?~~ "How do you use Social Media?" the results were as follows: 54 percent used social media to get news; 74.2 percent used social media to connect with peers; 59.6 percent said they used social media to find resources; and 66.7 percent said they used it for personal use (Shein, 2012). Not using social media limits a school leader's ability to keep up with other school leaders.

The third, or ~~bottom~~ "bottom drawer," ideas are those that educators should avoid. Bottom drawer uses include those that do not protect privacy rights of students or infringe on the civil or individual rights of others. They may even be illegal due to inappropriate content. This is the ~~abuse~~ "abuse" drawer. An obvious example of a teacher abusing the use of social media was reported on February 10, 2011, in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* by reporter Jeremy Roebuck. He reported the story about Natalie Munroe, an area teacher who had posted in her personal blog (a personal journal kept on the Internet) that she would like to call her students "ratlike," "frightfully dim," or "dunderheads" on their report cards. Ms. Munroe also wrote that she wished she could make the following comments about students so parents could gain greater insight into how their children were performing in school: ~~I~~ "I am concerned that your kid is going to come in one day and open fire on the school. (Wish I was kidding.)" She also posted, ~~I~~ "I called out sick a couple

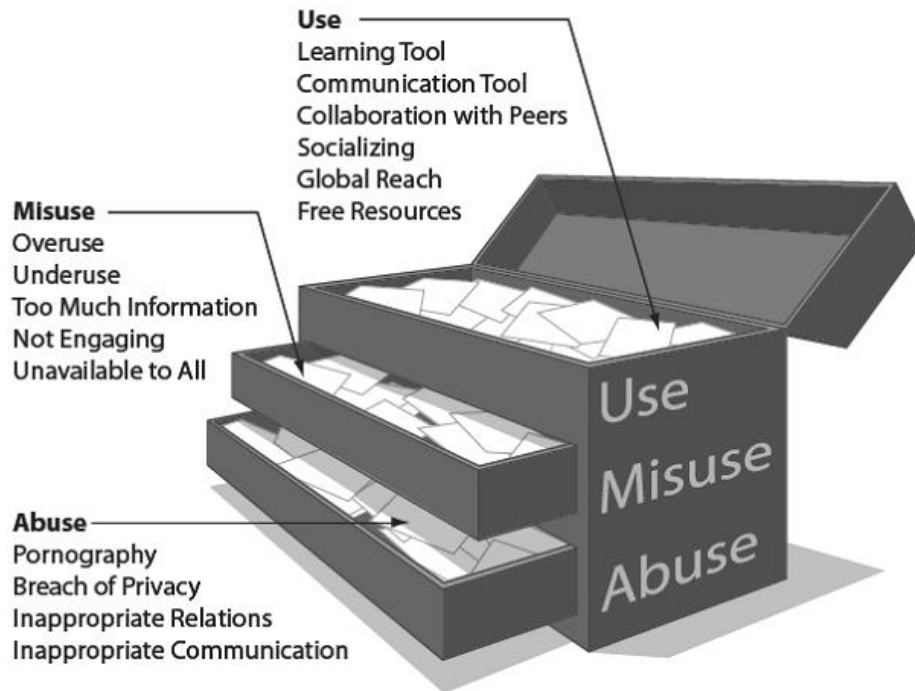
of days just to avoid your son,” and “There's no other way to say this: I hate your kid” (Meyer, 2011, p.1).

Additional abuses of social media by staff include any type of pornography and breaches of student privacy (to be covered in chapter 2). Social media has also been abused by staff when it is used as part of an inappropriate relationship, or is used to communicate inappropriately.

Numerous examples of staff abusing social media are shared in chapter 2, and there is a list of “Relevant Court Cases,” regarding the abuse of social media in Appendix B.

**Figure 1 Three-drawer Toolbox Including Use, Misuse and Abuse of Social Media**

**Top Drawer - Appropriate Use**  
**Middle Drawer - Potential Misuse**  
**Bottom Drawer - Abuse**



***Key Answers for School Leaders Concerning Social Media***

**1. What is social media?** –“Social media is digital content and interaction that is created by and between people.” (Cohen, May 2011, p. 1)

**2. How is it being used by students, teachers, and school leaders?** Student uses: learning tools, communication, collaboration, socializing, sharing of ideas, and free resources. Teacher uses: accountability to stakeholders, learning tools, communication, collaboration, professional development, student engagement, sharing of ideas, and free resources. School leader uses: accountability to stakeholders, learning tools, communication, collaboration, professional development, student engagement, sharing of ideas, and free resources.

**3. Why do school leaders need to know about the use of social media in schools?** They need to provide the visionary leadership on how social media should be used and provide the proper modeling of its use. They need to understand the social, ethical and legal issues and responsibilities surrounding the use of social media by school staff.

**4. What are a few examples of appropriate use of social media by school staff members?** Examples of appropriate use of social media by school staff members would include: proper collaboration with other educators, sharing of information with stakeholders, engaging activities with students, and communication with students, peers and school leaders.

**5. Describe a few instances when social media might be misused by school staff members.** Examples of how social media might be misused by school staff members would include: too much or not enough information with educators, the sharing of too much or not enough information with stakeholders, creating activities which do not engage students, communicating too much or not enough with students, peers and school leaders.

**6. Name a few examples of how social media can be abused by school staff members.**

This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2, and will include abuse due to infringing on rights of privacy, and other illegal uses of social media by school staff.

*Notes & Updates:*



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## **Resource Guide - Chapter 2 - Legal Aspects of Social Media Use by Staff in P-12 Education**

### **Points to Ponder Regarding Legal Aspects of Social Media Use by Staff in P-12 Education**

1. What should school leaders and staff members know about student privacy?
2. How far do the privacy rights of staff members go?
3. What is the “role model” expectation of educators?
4. What needs to happen for a nexus to be shown concerning a staff member’s abuse of social media?
5. What makes a teacher’s right to free speech constitutionally protected?

### ***Constitutional Issues: Privacy Concerns***

In discussing social media, two parts of the *Constitution of the United States* must be explored. The first part addresses the issue of privacy in using social media in schools; in the second part, the issue of freedom of speech and expression will be the topic. Frequently these two protections are at odds with the schools’ expectations of how all staff and students should share information when using social media. This section of the resource guide is designed specifically to address only staff use of social media.

An expectation of privacy, for most Americans, is as much part of being an American as is the right to vote or to own property. The explosion of technology has provided a wonderful opportunity, as well as a bit of a conundrum. Most users feel relatively comfortable using technology, yet they get a bit confused about how far they should go. The boundaries of use are not always straightforward, and the areas of individual understanding are not all black or white. Examples in the following sections will help illustrate this.

An example of a privacy issue involved Tyler Clementi, a freshman student at Rutgers University. Tyler committed suicide in 2009, days after video of his private sex acts was made public online, without his permission, by a fellow student in an online broadcast. The university indicated that its policy includes a regulation against recording someone on campus “where there is an expectation of privacy with respect to nudity and/or sexual activity” (Carter, 2009, p. 1). A policy was not enough. The goal for this resource guide is to equip those in leadership positions with information that will make them ready and willing to train school staff in social media areas. The director of policy and advocacy at the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, Paul Stephens, said that the Rutgers situation shows that some college students still need basic lessons on online conduct, though the actions against Clementi do appear to be an obvious privacy violation. “Even one tweet or one Facebook post leaves a digital footprint forever,” he said. “There are many consequences to what you do online . . . and we have a generation that grew up with this technology, and to a large extent, they have not considered what the consequences down the road could be for what they say right now” (Carter, 2009, p. 2). This is definitely an example of a bottom drawer abuse of social media.

In an article entitled *Why No One Cares About Privacy Anymore*, author Declan McCullagh (2010) writes, “Norms are changing with confidentiality giving way to openness” (p. 2). The article is primarily about Google’s co-founder, Sergey Brin, and the company’s social network, Google Buzz. The launching of Google Buzz in 2010 met some snags, and Google ended up being compelled by the Federal Trade Commission to reprogram Buzz in response to a class-action lawsuit. However, apparently only a very few of the Google Buzz users were concerned with the lack of privacy protections inherent in this new social medium. “Internet users have grown accustomed to informational exhibitionism” (p. 2). In fact the Pew Internet

Survey released in 2010, of all people with an online profile, nearly 40 percent have actually taken the extra steps necessary to disable privacy settings so anyone may view the content. Estimates are likely higher than 40 percent today. There are many opportunities for staff members to potentially enter into the middle drawer, or misuse, of social media by sharing too much information

Interestingly, in the same article, Richard Posner, a federal judge wrote, “I think privacy is greatly overrated because privacy basically means concealment. People conceal things in order to fool other people about them. They want to appear healthier than they are, smarter, more honest and so forth” (McCullagh, 2010, p. 3). Additional specific references also suggest less privacy can actually lead to a more honest society. Less privacy using technology helps markets function more efficiently, making it easy to identify and provide an appropriate product to the person who can use it at the time at which it can be used. This may make advertising more relevant, more fitting.

These same contemporary social media users are now humorously referred to as “Generation X-hibitionists” and have grown up constantly adjusting to living in a world of porn spam and Viagra ads. A generation earlier, their counterparts were embarrassed and even somewhat confused when viewing a simple feminine hygiene advertisement on television. A 2008 Harris Interactive Poll/CTIA (International Association for the Wireless Telecommunications Industry) of more than 2,000 American teens, indicates youth are rarely concerned about privacy. Of those surveyed, only 41 percent reported being concerned about privacy, while 59 percent were comfortable with providing private information to marketers. Interestingly, a Harris poll done in 1998, the year Google was introduced, found that 80 percent of people were anxious about shopping online due to concerns about privacy. In just one decade,

concern about privacy when using online communication has dramatically decreased, and the facts indicate that today's youth are comfortable with sharing their information with the masses (Harris, 2008). Inappropriate uses of social media can quickly turn a potential middle drawer problem to a bottom drawer problem.

Privacy was more of an expectation with Facebook when it was created, with users having to approve friends, implying a more intimate relationship, but Twitter uses the simple concept of a "follower." Twitter chose this option to increase openness, and it appears to have been a successful choice. Twitter's user numbers grew tenfold in 2009, while Facebook's membership doubled, and while it would be nearly impossible for Facebook to grow at the same swift rate as Twitter since it already has such a large audience, this still helps illustrate how Twitter's intentional choice to be more open and simple has worked quite well for it (McCullagh, 2010). Users should use this social media carefully, and remember a quote by Chris Pirillo on his blog: "Twitter is a great place to tell the world what you're thinking before you've had a chance to think about it" (Pirillo, 2011). Not thinking before using Twitter can result in a bottom drawer use.

Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's CEO, spoke at a technology conference in January of 2010, sharing with the audience that the present users of the Internet as a whole do not care as much about privacy. He said that in the seven years since he started Facebook, "people have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people—and that social norm is just something that has evolved over time" (McCullagh, 2010, p. 6). When Facebook moved in December 2009 to force users to reveal more, there was a slight backlash with a protest group entitled "Facebook! Fix the Privacy Settings." However, this protest group attracted only 3,400 members, which was less than one-

thousandth of 1 percent of Facebook's 350 million users at that time. To illustrate just how inconsequential this number of members appears, close to 1 million members were attracted to become members of a Facebook group of people who like to flip their pillows over to the cold side (Retrieved from Facebook on July 31, 2011). Zuckerberg appears to have a reasonable understanding of where his users' concerns about privacy lie.

In regard to students, the law has addressed their privacy at the federal level since 1974, when the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, was put into effect. JoAnn Marx-Talarczyk has provided a succinct list entitled *Five Things Teachers Should Know about Student Privacy*, and though it does not go into great detail about information shared using social media, the information does apply in that area as well (Marx-Talarczyk, 2011). Inappropriate uses of social media regarding student privacy will quickly take the staff action into the abuse drawer.

Marx-Talarczyk first mentions the official definitions a teacher should recognize in relation to FERPA, such as directory information, personally identifiable information, disclosure, and educational records. Marx-Talarczyk suggests that disclosure of information involves three basic categories: disclosure to parents and students, disclosure to third parties with the consent of the parent, and disclosure to third parties without any consent given. Under FERPA it is legal to share education records with the students who are 18 years or older, or to the parents of younger students. When a request is made, the school district is to provide the records before 45 calendar days have passed.

If records are to be shared with a third party, the parent or adult pupil must have given consent in writing, and the consent must indicate to whom the information is to be given, and the purpose for which it is given. Allowable disclosure to a third party without the consent of the

parent or adult student includes sending records to other schools or educational institutions, to the juvenile justice system, in response to lawsuits or subpoenas, and in the case of safety and health emergencies.

The third thing Marx-Talaryczyk suggests teachers should know about privacy is that parents not only have the right to request education records, they also may request that amendments be made to them. They have a right to file a complaint if the request for amendments is not honored. This complaint would then be heard by a third party, and that third party would decide if the requested amendment was suitable.

Fourth, school districts are required by FERPA to notify parents of their FERPA rights annually. Included in these notifications should be exactly what the rights are, how to exercise these rights, and who is considered to be a school official. The notification should be made in the primary language of the parents and accessible to those who are disabled.

Finally, FERPA requires that schools must keep accurate records of all parties receiving education records, the stated interest of those same parties, and the names of any additional parties receiving those records. Information regarding FERPA applies not only to school officials, but also to all employees in an educational setting. It is important that all those who use technology to communicate about students and their records are aware of the FERPA requirements concerning those communications.

For educators themselves, the concept of privacy is not absolute. Though teachers have some privacy rights, the courts have not consistently defended those rights. Something the courts have agreed upon is that educators do indeed have the right to private lives, but additionally they also have a duty to keep them private. If school employees value their privacy and their positions as educators, allowing their private lives to become public is a choice that



may bear consequences” (Dunklee & Shoop, 2006, p. 118). If teachers want their private lives to be respected, they need to keep them private and not post information they want to stay confidential onto any type of social media.

However, Dunklee and Shoop also reference the need for there to be a connection or a *nexus* between what the teacher’s private acts are and that person’s actual employment in the school setting. —If a nexus cannot be shown—that is, that something in the educator’s private life has reduced the educator’s ability to maintain discipline, present curriculum, or in some other way, perform his or her professional duties—then actions in the educator’s private life may not be usable in a disciplinary or termination proceeding” (Dunklee & Shoop, 2006, p. 118).

Educators are held in esteem by many in society and tend accordingly to have higher expectations placed on them, and rightfully so. However, the courts have established that idle conjecture should be considered an encroachment on the employee’s private life. —Although a school board can inquire into the character, integrity, and personal life of its employees, reprimands or dismissals must be based on supported facts that are neither arbitrary nor capricious” (Dunklee & Shoop, 2006, p. 118).

***Constitutional Issues: Free Speech Concerns***

Differences exist in the expectations of privacy for the staff versus those given to students, and they are based primarily on the fact that members of the staff are of the age of majority. Differences may also be based on the reality of the teachers being viewed as role models for students. This section, like the preceding one, is aimed at the staff members themselves.

Before launching into the various ways staff members have actually violated good sense and the laws concerning the use of social media, it is important to look first at the general

guidelines used in addressing employee misconduct. Teachers are contracted employees and have a protected interest in maintaining that employment after they are hired. In order to end that employment relationship, there needs to be “good” or “just” cause for termination. This cause becomes even more complex when the misconduct occurs off campus or is not necessarily school related.

Educators at times find themselves in situations where there is a conflict perceived between their personal lives and professional responsibilities. Two major themes become apparent when considering how an educator’s personal life and professional responsibilities are connected. This connection may be in considering the teacher as a role model, or it may be in looking for a more literal connection, a nexus, between the educator’s actions and the impact of those actions on the students.

The role model expectation of educators came first. —Dewey’s writing in 1909 regarding teachers stated “their actions, words, and so on carry a moral significance in themselves . . . teachers act as moral agents all the time, unconsciously” (Davison, Strobe & Uerling, 2003, p. 5). More recently, Justice Lewis Powell wrote in *Ambach v. Norwick, 1979*, “A teacher serves as a role model for his students, exerting a subtle but important influence over their perceptions and values.”

Teachers are considered to be role models and, therefore, may actually be terminated for misconduct that is not seen as specifically performance related. In most other occupations, what individuals do in their private time or personal lives is not typically considered something which can be scrutinized by their employers. However, due to this precedent and foundational belief, teachers are “held to a standard of personal conduct that does not permit the commission of immoral or criminal acts because of the harmful impression made on the students” (*Board of*

*Education of Hopkins County v. Woods, 1986*). As one author in the article *The Personal Lives and Professional Responsibilities of P-12 Educators: Off-duty Conduct as Grounds for Adverse Employment Actions* states, —Parents demand the teacher to be a better role model of behavior and conduct for their children than they are themselves” (Davison Strope, & Uerling, 2003, p. 1).

The second, or nexus, theory was adopted and applied in the California Supreme Court case of *Morrison v. State Board of Education, 1968*. That decision —listed a set of factors to consider when establishing a rational nexus between a teacher’s off-duty conduct and his job.” Factors listed range from the likelihood that the conduct may adversely affect students or fellow teachers, to the degree of adversity anticipated, the likelihood of the recurrence of the questioned conduct, or the —chilling effect upon the constitutional rights of the teacher involved or other teachers” (Davison et al., 2003, p. 5).

All building and district-level administrators must know what can be done when an educator does something that might be considered misuse or abuse of social media. Even more importantly, this ought not to be about what can be done but what *should* be done. The reality is that the outcomes of these types of cases may vary from state to state, and this makes it that much more important for an administrator to be cognizant of the legal rights of all of the district’s employees. The balance of the outcome must be one that protects the rights of teachers while ensuring that the school’s learning environment is not disrupted.

A school leader needs a guide to consult in making decisions regarding the consequences of a staff action or whether the action was something that could be ignored. Consider the following list shared by Davison, Strope and Uerling in their article *The Personal Lives and Professional Responsibilities of P-12 Educators (2003)*:

Off-Duty Conduct as Grounds for Adverse Employment Actions:

1. The likelihood that conduct may have adversely affected students or fellow teachers;
2. The degree of such adversity anticipated;
3. The proximity or remoteness in time of the conduct;
4. The type of teaching certificate held by the party involved;
5. The extenuating or aggravating circumstances, if any, surrounding the conduct;
6. The praiseworthiness or blameworthiness of the motives resulting in the conduct;
7. The likelihood of the recurrence of the questioned conduct;
8. The extent to which disciplinary action may inflict an adverse impact or chilling effect upon the constitutional rights of the teacher involved or other teachers.

Occasionally a case will indicate that a teacher was terminated for immorality.

Challenges to terminations have been based on the issue of “immorality” being a term that is unconstitutionally vague. The courts have consistently discarded the argument of vagueness as long as the suspected misbehavior can be tied to a teacher’s suitability to teach. School districts must always ensure that before they suspend, terminate, or nonrenew an employee, the rationale for taking such action is permitted by district policy or state statute. In most states, tenured teachers may only be removed from employment for “cause,” and “cause” typically includes unprofessional or immoral conduct.

Inappropriate online behavior or offensive teacher blogs, tweets, posts, or messages might be argued as constituting immoral behavior. In Illinois, if a school official determines that online, off-duty conduct was immoral, the official must then decide whether the conduct is considered “remediable” or “irremediable.” The teacher’s conduct would be considered “irremediable” when: (1) the conduct caused significant damage to students, faculty, or the school; and (2) the teacher would not have corrected his or her conduct, even if the teacher had

been issued a written warning and afforded a period of time for remediation. —Remediable” conduct constitutes misconduct in the ordinary course of duties which, if advised of, could ordinarily be remedied. Irremediable conduct is subject to termination, while remediable conduct is subject to discipline short of termination (*Ahmad v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 2006*). Immoral conduct is considered irremediable in most states, and depending on the severity of the conduct, it can lead to discipline up to and including termination. —School officials in these cases should consider the dissemination of the online material and the residual effect the posting or image has had on the student body and the community. Specifically, school officials should determine if the misconduct has a significant connection to the teacher’s professional responsibilities” (Todd, DiJohn, & Aldridge, 2008, p. 2).

How do school officials decide if off-duty, online conduct shows a considerable connection to the teacher’s responsibility as an educator? It must be determined whether that same off-duty, online conduct is irremediable per se and whether it results in sufficient grounds for teacher discipline. Some types of conduct, such as driving under the influence, possession of a controlled substance, and assault and battery charges have been considered irremediable conduct even without a formal conviction. So it stands also that the illegal misuse of drugs or alcohol or any other criminal behavior documented on a social media site would likely be considered irremediable conduct leading to a district’s determination to discipline or terminate a teacher’s contract.

The previously mentioned behaviors are more severe than some types of general misuse of social media potentially conducted by a teacher. It is in these less-than-obvious behaviors that there would have to be a nexus analysis to determine whether the off-duty misconduct actually negatively and significantly affected the teacher’s ability to perform the job. It is left to the

school district’s discretion to decide whether a teacher is able to be effective and serve as a role model for his students.

One situation where a teacher’s online behavior affects her ability to perform, and one that justifies discipline and termination, is the giving out of confidential student information in a blog. Many potential issues are at stake in these types of situations, including the potential FERPA violations. The guide created in this research definitely will need to help school leaders inform staff of the potential consequences for this type of conduct. Privacy violations will almost always be considered a bottom drawer behavior.

School boards are not empowered to take adverse action on an employee’s contract simply due to the board’s subjective annoyance regarding the employee’s personal or private conduct. They cannot arbitrarily nonrenew a teacher due to reasons such as obesity or failure to attend church. The board must actually establish —“sufficient nexus between such improper conduct and the board’s legitimate interest in protecting the school community from harm” (*Lile v. Hancock Place School District, 1985*).

Negotiated agreements must be in compliance with board of education policy and state statutes. As an example, one negotiated agreement discusses the reasons a teacher may be disciplined, in Section C., —Actions Taken Against Teachers” as follows:

No teacher will be disciplined, reprimanded, reduced in rank of compensation, suspended, discontinued in employment or deprived of any professional advantage without just cause. Examples of just cause could include: conviction of a felony; unauthorized conversion of the district property for personal or non-district purposes; substantial or persistent violation of BOE policies, rules, or regulations; persistent or willful insubordination; incompetence; conduct which results in a professional educator’s

inability to teach effectively in a classroom; and other causes which are not arbitrary, irrational, unreasonable or irrelevant to the Board of Education's task of building and maintaining an efficient school system (Unified School District 266, Maize, Kansas, Negotiated Agreement, 2010).

In order to establish a nexus, courts have indicated that the conduct must have involved a student or a school-aged individual; the act itself must have been broadly publicized; the event must have taken place in public, thereby removing the actor's right to privacy; or the conduct must have been the product of a bigger, irreversible predicament or situation (Hooker, 1995).

Another important matter to keep in mind is that due process guarantees apply, and teachers are entitled to identical due process protection regardless of whether the reason for discipline occurred on campus. The schoolhouse gate, in essence, does not exist when it comes to the behaviors of teachers and their rights to due process.

***Relevant Court Cases: Facebook and My Space***

Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace, allow individuals to: (1) create a public or semi-public profile or web-page type structure within a bounded system; (2) articulate and maintain a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and (3) view their list of connections and connections made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). As of 2011, Facebook was the sixth most-trafficked Internet site in the United States, with 2.6 billion user minutes spent on Facebook daily throughout the world. In 2011, Facebook had 500 million active users, with more than 700,000 photographs uploaded monthly. Going into 2012, Facebook had over 800 million active users, with more than 250,000 million photos uploaded daily. Facebook's growth appears to redefine Moore's Law. Though MySpace gained hold

earlier, it has been surpassed by Facebook. MySpace does cater to a younger crowd (under 18 years of age), with more than 100 million members enrolled by 2007 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Regarding staff use of social media, one can easily find numerous examples of teachers using Facebook and MySpace inappropriately, in a bottom drawer manner. It seems a month cannot go by without one hearing about another ill-fated choice by a staff member to use one of these popular social media in a way that leaves one wondering, "Did these educators give their actions any thought at all?" For instance, a North Carolina teacher was dismissed for unprofessional conduct based on Facebook posting. Her postings included statements such as, "I am teaching in the most ghetto school in Charlotte," and she listed one of her hobbies as "drinking" (Helms, 2008, p. 1).

In *Snyder v. Millersville, 2008* it is revealed that this issue also pertains to pre-service teachers. Millersville University decided not to award Stacy Snyder her teaching degree, based in part on a picture she posted to her MySpace page showing her doing what appeared to be consuming alcohol and celebrating in a pirate hat. Snyder countered by suing the university, claiming they had violated her constitutional rights. She alleged that she had been denied her degree for posting something to her MySpace page, which she believed was her First Amendment free speech right. In this case, Snyder had attended an orientation session where she was warned not to make inappropriate comments on social network sites. She was given specific instructions, which she then chose not to follow. The university did a thorough job of documenting why her degree was not granted, proving that it was due to poor job performance, and not simply to comments made on social network sites. The university's documentation took a potential middle drawer behavior down to a bottom drawer level.



In October 2010, a 54-year-old teacher submitted her resignation for what she called a “stupid mistake” (Knight, October 5, 2010). She indicated that she thought her comments were private and that they were only accessible to her close, private circle of friends on Facebook, but she was mistaken. She lost her high school teaching job in Massachusetts after parents complained about comments about their children she shared on Facebook. She referred to students as “germ bags” and claimed she had been sick for months because of them. She also went on to say her students’ parents were “snobby” and “arrogant” and that she was “so not looking forward to another year” at school. She will not have another year at that school (Knight, October 5, 2010).

Claire Knight, the newspaper reporter for the preceding story, had to wait only five days to publish another article, *Look Who’s Fired Now*, about a Georgia school bus driver who lost her job for “humiliating him (the superintendent) and the district” with disparaging comments about the district’s plan to install artificial turf. She was fired for “lack of professionalism” (Knight, October 15, 2010).

Yet another recent teacher suspension occurred in early April 2011 in New Jersey. The Paterson School District suspended a first-grade teacher following complaints from parents that the teacher posted negative remarks about her students on her Facebook page. Theodore Best, the Board of Education president, told the newspaper that the teacher was suspended “because the incident created serious problems at the school that impeded the functioning of the building. You can’t simply fire someone for what they have on a Facebook page, but if that spills over and affects the classroom, then you can take action” (*Huffington Post*, April 20, 2011).

In 2007, John Bush, a middle-school teacher in Florida, was fired after his superintendent discovered “inappropriate material” on Bush’s personal MySpace website. The school district

pointed out that, while the content was not pornographic, they determined that the webpage contained personal information about Bush that parents would not want their children to know about their teacher. The school district did not restrict teachers from having personal web pages, but it did inform all district staff not to post inappropriate material on the Internet. The vagueness of this statement indicates that additional discussion and policies need to be considered (Simpson, 2008).

In *Spanierman v. Hughes, 2008*, after viewing several students' MySpace pages, at their request, a non-tenured high school English teacher opened a MySpace account and created several profiles that he used to communicate with students. His posts contained inappropriate content, such as pictures of naked men, and other unsuitable comments. He was subsequently placed on administrative leave and was non-renewed. In upholding his non-renewal, the Connecticut State Court held that, in part, a teacher's interest in the renewal of his teaching contract was not a protected-property interest under the due-process clause. The teacher had failed to demonstrate causation between protected speech and adverse employment action, as required on a First Amendment retaliation claim. There was no evidence that the Internet networking site purported to speak out on matters of public concern, as required to support a First Amendment freedom-of-expression-association claim. The teacher had failed to demonstrate causation between protected association and adverse employment action, as required on a First Amendment retaliation claim. Additionally, the content of the profiles did not address matters of public concern but were personal conversations or creative writing. The school could expect a teacher to maintain a professional, respectful relationship with students. Consequently, when this English teacher was using MySpace, he was not acting pursuant to his

responsibilities as a teacher; therefore, his non-renewal was upheld (*Spanierman v. Hughes*, 2008).

These expectations for proper Facebook use pertain to administrators as well as to teachers and bus drivers. One new superintendent's tenure was short-lived after he chose to post a Facebook message that he had counseled an administrator to retire or face termination. And then he made an additional bad choice by ending his post with a smiley face emoticon. (An emoticon is a symbolic picture using keyboard characters.) His almost-new contract was terminated due to violations of the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for School Administrators and a Code for Educators. The Board of Education Chairwoman wrote, "Your actions, among other things, were unethical and a breach of privacy and could result in liability to the Board and the Town of Windsor Locks" (Beals, 2010, p. 1).

The Kansas Association of School Boards suggests that teachers consider the following when working with social network sites:

1. If you have a personal account, restrict viewing by students. Don't list students as "friends."
2. Do not place pictures of your students on your personal site. Doing this invites a higher level of scrutiny.
3. Ask yourself, "Would you want the contents of your social networking site or your blog featured on the six o'clock news?"
4. Always keep in mind that teachers are held to a high standard for behavior, judgment, and professionalism. (Personal communication with Donna Whiteman, October 14, 2010.)

***Relevant Court Cases: Blogging and Websites***

Web logs, blogs, or online journals are attractive to many; as of 2011 there were approximately 150 million blogs, with 175 new blogs being created daily that were followed by more than 350 million blog readers (Rasmussen, 2011). A high rate of anonymity is made available to those who create blogs and to those who post on them. Perhaps this anonymity is a contributing reason for their high use: 77 percent of all Internet users are “bloggers” (Rasmussen, 2011).

Blogs are utilized by teachers for various reasons. Some educators use blogs as a way to connect with students, colleagues, administrators and parents in a thoughtful educational discussion. Sadly, some have used their blogs as a place to go on a tirade about students, colleagues, administrators and parents. Many other educators use blogs and other social media sites as places to interact with others on topics of mutual interest that are totally unrelated to anything connected to their teaching careers.

As mentioned in the discussion of freedom of speech, teachers do have some rights to express themselves using social media; however, unlike those working in the private sector, teachers are seen as role models for the children they have been entrusted to educate. Parents and guardians trust educators with the responsibility of imparting societal values and good citizenship qualities. The school district does have the ability and authority to discipline a teacher to some degree for online conduct, whether on- or off-duty depending on: (1) whether the teacher has tenure; (2) the type of offending behavior, which may be defined by statute; (3) the correlation, or nexus, between the conduct and job performance; (4) the conditions and terms of the collective bargaining agreement; and (5) First Amendment constitutional considerations. Non-tenured, or probationary, teachers are generally “at-will” employees and are not protected by statute or collective agreement. Therefore, school districts have more flexibility in

terminating or disciplining probationary teachers for online, off-duty transgressions (Todd et al., 2008).

Issues with blogs, like any other social media, include defamation, harassment, economic damage or damage to the reputation of the employer, and disclosure of confidential information, including student information and as school district information. The law offers no special protection for blogging, any more than it offers it protection for other social media. In the issue of public-employee speech, the foundation question exists: Is it part of the employees' duties? Their speech is not protected when they make statements pursuant to their official duties. When they do this, they are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the *Constitution of the United States* does not insulate their communications from employer discipline (*Garcetti v. Ceballos, 2006*). The following inappropriate uses of social media are all examples of bottom drawer behaviors.

In the case of *Richerson v. Beckon, 2008*, a curriculum director was removed from her position and demoted to her prior teaching position because of a statement she shared on her blog. She was reprimanded for commenting on her replacement and, thereby, violating the confidentiality expected of a member of an employee interview team. She then verbally attacked the teachers' chief negotiator. In the end, her speech was seen as a matter protected due to its being a public concern, but her personal attacks on specific individuals were the reason for her discipline (*Richerson v. Beckon, 2008*).

In yet another case, one at the university level, an employee was discharged for "egregious misconduct," including creating and distributing information at his workplace about his personal website that complained about the low wages the university paid some employees.

He also accessed and worked on the website at the workplace. His attempts to be reinstated failed (*Mammone v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 2006).

Another issue that arises in this area is whether a communication is a matter of public concern. The balancing of interests exists between this and the *Pickering* factors, which were a result of the case of *Pickering v. BOE of Township High School District 205*, 1968. In that case, the Supreme Court held that, absent proof of false statements knowingly or recklessly made, the teachers' exercise of their right to speak out on issues of public concern cannot be used as the basis for dismissal from public employment. This balancing test was further clarified in *Connick v. Myers*, 1983. The Connick-Pickering test indicates that —a teacher may establish that his or her speech is constitutionally protected if: (1) the teacher spoke as a citizen on matter of public concern; and (2) the teacher's interest as a citizen in commenting upon matters of public concern outweighs the interest of the school district in promoting the efficiency of its public services" (Todd, et al., 2008, p.2).

In a related case, *Nickolas v. Fletcher*, 2008, in Kentucky, the court denied an employee's injunction in a case challenging the state's decision to disallow state employees from accessing blogs from state-owned computers. The employee, Nickolas, was a "blogger" whose personal website focused on Kentucky political affairs and was critical of the Fletcher administration. As a result of the disputed state policy, state employees could no longer access Nickolas' website and other websites from state-owned computers. Nickolas alleged that the Kentucky's policy infringed upon his constitutional rights under the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause. The state of Kentucky allows employees to access the Internet for work-related reasons and for limited personal uses as long as it never interferes with the employees' official duties. This case resulted in a policy change by the state after a survey indicated personal use was

leading to a decrease in employee efficiency. This decision could very well apply to other state employees, including public educators.

The world of blogging has, like many other areas in technology, led to the creation of a new word: “dooced.” This word, the common jargon for losing one’s job because of the contents of one’s blog, is the accidental creation of Heather Armstrong of Los Angeles, who in 2001, posted satirical accounts of her workplace and colleagues on her blog, [www.dooce.com](http://www.dooce.com). In 2002 she was fired for doing this. Armstrong writes, “I started this website in February of 2001. A year later I was fired from my job for this website because I had written stories that included people in my workplace. My advice to you is BE YE NOT SO STUPID” (Armstrong, 2011).

As late as 2011, discipline for online blogging, done off duty, has not led to significant litigation. However, there are two types of cases in which the Supreme Court appears to limit the employer’s right to restrict employees’ First Amendment free speech. The first type “involves instances where a public employee speaks out about the functioning of the branch of government for which he or she works, a matter on which he or she is uniquely qualified to comment by virtue of their job status,” and the second type “involves government regulation of statements that are unrelated to the employee’s job” (*Roberts v. Ward*, 2006). Again, this is something for both school staff and school leaders to watch since they are public employees.

In the present technological climate the above-mentioned cases are definitely not unique. The Employment Law Alliance surveyed more than 1,000 American employees in 2006 and discovered that nearly 5 percent maintained personal blogs. Of that group, 16 percent admitted to posting critical remarks about their co-workers, supervisors, employers, or customers. A blog-tracking website, [technocrat.com](http://technocrat.com), listed nearly 850 blogs created by teachers in 2006, many of

which got thousands of hits every week. An employment defense attorney, Shalanda Ballard, who has practiced in all areas of employment litigation, stated in her article, *Social Networking Can Get You Fired*, how a recent survey discovered that 17 percent of large employers have disciplined employees for social networking activities and 8 percent of large employers have terminated employees for social networking activities. Ballard indicates her belief that these numbers will likely increase in the future, given the growth of social network use by employees. She finishes her article with the careful warning, “You should continue to network on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter, but be careful because your social networking activities can result in discipline, up to and including your termination” (p. 3).

In summary, if the speech is not about a matter of public concern, the speech is typically unprotected, and discipline may be imposed. When the speech relates to matters of public concern and then results in no potential disruption to the school environment or the teacher’s ability to perform his or her duties, the speech is typically protected. However, in situations where the speech concerns a public matter, but is possibly disruptive to the school environment or the teacher’s ability to perform his or her duties, then that speech is not protected, and discipline is allowed to be imposed (Todd, et al., 2008).

Some advice from the Kansas Association of School Boards concerning employee’s personal blogs:

1. Do not blog on the job.
2. Use your own equipment, not school district equipment.
3. Remember a blog has the potential to be read by thousands of people, including those you may be writing about.
4. Think before you post.



5. Do not post material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, or libelous.
6. If you identify yourself as a school district employee, make sure you indicate that opinions expressed are your own, not those of the Unified School District (USD).
7. Do not use symbols, logos or other USD trademarks on your blog unless you have explicit permission.
8. Don't write anything in a blog you wouldn't want to be on the front page of the local newspaper.
9. Anonymous or not? Just because your blog identity doesn't give your name, that doesn't mean that you are or will remain anonymous (Rasmussen, 2011).

***Relevant Court Cases: Twitter, Instant or Text Messaging, and Sexting***

Twitter is one of the fastest-growing social networks. It is also known as a micro-blog or super-texting. To "twitter" is to correspond through exchange of 140-character messages. Twitter was started in 2006, and in only five years it grew to 6 million "tweeters," making 225 million "tweets" per day, and recent studies indicate that 5 percent of tweeters are responsible for 95 percent of tweets (Rasmussen, 2011). After close to six years, Twitter has grown to include more than 200 million "tweeters." The following statistics describing Twitter illustrate the explosive growth of this social medium (as of March, 2011).

1. Twitter reached 1 billion tweets in three years, two months and one day. Now Twitter users send one billion tweets per week.
2. One year ago, users sent an average of 50 million tweets per day. Today, that average is 140 million. And the number is growing.
3. The average number of accounts created per day is 460,000.

4. There has been a 182 percent increase in Twitter mobile users in 2011 as compared to 2010.
5. Twitter has grown from eight employees in January 2008 to 400 employees as of March, 2011 (TNW: Twitter: Part of the Next Web Family, March, 2011).

This will definitely be a type of social media to watch and prepare to use appropriately as its use grows. Considerable research is being done on Twitter and its increased popularity among students and staff.

Related to the 140-character Twitter communication are instant messaging and texting. These forms of social media have been available for a longer period of time than Twitter, and have more history of misuse. Consider the following texting or sexting case. (Sexting refers to an act of sending sexually explicit materials through mobile phones. The word is derived from the combination of the two terms —~~se~~” and ~~texting~~.” In August 2005, Pamela Rogers, 28 years old, was sentenced to nine months in jail for engaging in sex with a 13-year-old student. The following February, she was released on probation after serving six months in jail. Two months later, she was arrested for violating her probation by contacting her victim and was released on bail. Later that same month, she was arrested for violating her probation a second time. This second violation was issued because she sent sexually explicit videos of herself to her victim by camera phone. Not surprisingly, this time her bail was denied. In July 2006, Rogers was sentenced to a seven-year prison term, was terminated from her teaching position, and was forced to surrender her teaching license.

In another texting case, where the behavior belongs in the bottom drawer, middle-school teacher, Ann Greenfield from Murray, Kentucky, inadvertently sent text messages that dealt with her efforts to purchase marijuana to a Kentucky State Trooper. The trooper set up a meeting

with Greenfield, arrested her, and eventually charged her with conspiracy to traffic controlled substances, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia. She was terminated from her teaching contract in 2007, yet would be allowed to get her job back in 2009 if she underwent drug treatment and passed four random screens for drugs (Rasmussen, 2011).

Texting is an often-used mode of communication by high school students. The Kaiser Family Foundation Study indicates seventh-twelfth graders report spending an average of 1 hour and 35 minutes a day sending or receiving texts. Because of this, it is paramount that educators are familiar with this type of communication, and feel confident using it themselves (2011).

Teachers can be on the receiving end of inappropriate texting, as well. “If a teacher receives a text from a student, and the content is sexual or improper, he should preserve the text and immediately contact the building administrator/superintendent,” according to Donna Whiteman, Assistant Executive Director/Legal Services for the Kansas Association of School Boards. She went on to say, “If there is any nudity or potentially harassing content he should contact law enforcement. It is critical that the teacher report it to the administrator and police since sending it could be a crime” (Whiteman, personal communication, January 3, 2012)

Regardless of the social media used, school leaders must be prepared to facilitate the appropriate use of these media by all staff members. School leaders must be prepared to facilitate the appropriate use of all types of social media by their staff members. In looking at the use of Facebook and MySpace, blogs and websites, Twitter, instant and text messaging or sexting, school leaders must understand that it makes no difference whether the use of social media by staff was done on or off campus. Similarly, it makes no difference if the use of social media is done on school time or after hours. Use of social media by staff has the same expectations whether the communication was staff initiated or in reaction to a student

communication via social media. Policies need to be set for social media use, and training over the policies is necessary. Some states currently require set policies and training, but all states have strict legal prohibitions against any type of sexting involving staff members. Legal exposure for using social media inappropriately may be the responsibility of the staff member and/or the school district. Potential penalties for inappropriate use of social media depend on the content of the information shared. Penalties include revocation of a teaching license, termination of their teaching contract, and a potential prison term.

***Key Answers Regarding Social Media Use by Staff in P-12 Education***

- 1. What should school leaders and staff members know about student privacy?** School leaders need to know that students may not be as concerned about privacy as they should be. Staff members must know what student privacy laws are. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): (1) defines what students, parents and third parties have the right to know; (2) who records can be shared with; (3) how amendments to records can be made; (4) who must be made aware of their rights; and (5) how these records must be kept.
- 2. How far do the privacy rights of staff members go?** Staff members need to know that their privacy rights are not absolute. They have some privacy rights, but typically the courts have not defended that right when or if it affects their ability to carry out their teaching responsibilities. A rule of thumb seems to be that if teachers want their private lives to be respected they will need to keep them private and never post information they want to stay confidential onto any type of social media.
- 3. What is the “role model” expectation of educators?** This expectation was presented in Thomas Dewey’s writings in 1909 when he wrote that teachers –actions, words, and so on carry a moral significance in themselves. . .teachers act as moral agents all the time, unconsciously.” They were legally defended by the United States Supreme Court in the 1979 case of *Ambach v. Norwick*, when Justice Lewis Powell wrote, –A teacher serves as a role model for his students, exerting a subtle but important influence over their perceptions and values.”
- 4. What needs to happen for a nexus to be shown concerning a staff member’s abuse of social media?** A nexus, or connection, between the educator’s actions and the result of those actions on the students may be established by the considering the following:

- Is there likelihood that the conduct may adversely affect students or fellow teachers?
- Was the degree of such impact anticipated?
- When did the actions take place?
- What are the extenuating or aggravating circumstances?
- Are the motives praiseworthy or blameless?
- What impact would disciplinary action have on the constitutional rights of the teacher?
- Did the conduct involve a student or school-aged individual?
- Was the act broadly publicized?
- Did the event take place in public, removing the teacher's right to privacy?

**5. What makes a teacher's right to free speech constitutionally protected?** Free speech constitutional protection may be established by answering the following questions:

- Is the teacher addressing matters of public concern?
- Is the teacher acting pursuant to his or her responsibilities as a teacher?
- Did the teacher's actions breach the privacy of another staff member or student?
- Did the teacher's actions cause a disruption to the school environment or the teacher's ability to perform his or her duties?

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## **Resource Guide - Chapter 3 - Promising Practices: Why use social media?**

### **Points to Ponder Concerning Promising Practices: Why Use Social Media?**

1. In what ways might teachers use social media to aid students?
2. How might teachers use social media to enhance their own education?

Many examples of promising practices in the use of social media in schools exist. The practices shared in this resource guide include those used by educators working with students and by educators who are using social media with others in their field.

A theme that persists in the study of social media use in education is one included in the title, *Your Students Love Social Media . . . and So Can You*, an article by Camille Jackson, for *Teaching Tolerance*. The article reminds all educators that the fear of new technology is nothing new, and that there were many of the same or similar concerns when the television was initially introduced. Teens now, as always, search for affirmation, and social media may provide them with opportunities to build their identities. Students of this generation connect by using social media. Pam Rutledge, a psychologist and director of Media Psychology Resource Center, is quoted in Jackson's article, "People connect—that's what they do. That's a biological function, not an aberration. The desire to grow up and do these adult things overrides caution. It's not pathological. It's normal teen behavior" (p.1).

Social media can help students in specific ways. For example, Erica Robles, an assistant professor of media and communications at New York University, found that students felt less pressure when asked to answer questions using Twitter, even if they felt they might be giving the wrong answers. It helped them participate more freely (Jackson, 2011). The same article relates that this is also the case for students of various ages. A middle school teacher shares how he

uses social media as a tool to help his students learn from people right in their own school as well as from around the globe.

Building trust with students using social media is a way to help them monitor themselves. “One way to model digital citizenship is to be there online and let yourself be seen as part of that world” (Jackson, 2011, p. 1). He adds, “Social media is part of kids’ lives. Either we acknowledge it exists and allow ourselves to be part of the conversation, or it is one more way school becomes irrelevant to kids. Any tool is a weapon if you hold it right” (p. 1). Lehman goes on to say that when students are trusted, they work to monitor themselves. Recently, in his Philadelphia high school, a few students had started a page on Facebook that slammed the school, and the students took it upon themselves to make it go away. They learned by doing, not by being told to do something.

Peer interaction is another recurring positive reason for using social media. In an economic time where money for education is limited, online collaborative learning spaces may be just what students need when the district’s hiring of extra teachers is not likely to happen. One such example is a social media study site called Grockit. (The word “grock” means to understand something intuitively or by empathy [Wikipedia].) This site offers test-prep services focusing on English and math for grades 8-12, and science and history are on the horizon. Grockit provides open enrollment for a free Summer Enrichment Academy and is designed to help keep students current, helping them by participating in group-study online forums not to fall behind during the summer months. These students help each other, and they do it for free with millions of their peers on the subjects of their own choosing. They use chats and they earn points for their own achievements or for helping peers. The group-study and collaborative-learning opportunities are free, and parents may purchase some additional information for data

specific to their child's needs. As Farb Nivi, Grockit's creator and CEO, suggests, "Because of that social factor, the power in it isn't just answering a question—it's the positive peer influence on learning" (Devaney, May 2010, p. 2).

In another article, "The New Writing Pedagogy: Using social networking tools to keep up with student interests," Angela Pascopella and Will Richardson write about some amazing ways students are using technology to change the way writing is done. For example, a special-needs sixth-grader in California created a blog where he wrote as though he were a World War II veteran. Responses came in from around the country, and the reinforcement naturally helped keep him engaged in writing in a way he had never before experienced. He went from being an outcast to becoming a confident writer, one who no longer needed special-education assistance (Pascopella & Richardson, 2009).

Web-based social networking tools like blogs, wikis, YouTube and Facebook may very likely be the next real modification of writing pedagogy. (A wiki is a website that allows anyone to add, delete, or revise content by using a web browser.) This new way of writing could very well focus on writing for global audiences, and may well facilitate conversations between those who are passionate about certain topics, thus increasing the real joy of writing.

Specific "new literacies" for the 21st century readers and writers were published by the National Council of Teachers of English in 2008. Among those literacies are the capability to "build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally," to "design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes," and to "create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts" (Pascopella & Richardson, 2009, p. 46). To do this type of writing work, one must expand on the way one thinks about writing instruction through the use of online social media tools.

Students are currently writing for real audiences and for real purposes. They are posting information on Facebook and on other social media, where it will be shared with so many more people than when they wrote solely for the teacher, for others in the class, or simply to hang on the doors of their home refrigerators. They are writing in real ways, filling digital spaces, and communicating differently. Educators need to guide them in this new 21st century way of communicating. This type of writing goes beyond language arts classes into social studies, and even math. “How can a math teacher ignore the collaborative potentials of having kids work in a Google spreadsheet?” asks Hicks, the author of the book, *The Digital Writing Workshop*. “That’s writing too. Collaboration on almost every level is just a part of the equation today” (Hicks in Pascopella & Richardson, 2009, p. 47).

A guest blogger, Brian Jenkins, posted the following question on GilsMethod.com: “Social media, can it actually enhance education?” Then he offered ways teachers are using social media to enhance the learning experience:

1. Facebook groups: Teachers can create Facebook groups for their classes or a particular class project and ask students to join the groups. Students and their teachers can discuss class-related topics on a platform enjoyed by students. Teachers can use the walls on their Facebook group pages to provide materials such as articles, news clips, videos, and links to pertinent websites. Students can use discussion boards to share their thoughts.
2. Facebook Applications: Facebook provides more than 200 education-related applications. These tools allow teachers to provide presentations, tests, and notes for their students. The study groups application lets students work together outside of the classroom. They can work on group projects, share notes, and help each other

- prepare for tests. The Webinaria Screencast Recorder lets teachers make videos to share with their students on Facebook.
3. Social Bookmarks: Tools such as Delicious and Diigo are being used by teachers to provide current articles, websites, and other subject matter instead of using traditional textbooks. Diigo allows teachers to highlight text and photographs and add sticky notes to bookmarked pages, which provide teachers ways to include their thoughts and ideas. Students can subscribe to the Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and are automatically notified when a new bookmark is added.
  4. Wikis: Teachers use wikis to provide students access to class documents, outlines, and other essential information. Students also have the opportunity to add their own content. The format encourages an exchange of ideas and adds an entertaining element to students' homework.
  5. Twitter: Teachers can ask students to create a few education-related tweets every week. Teachers and students can ask questions and respond via twitter. The tweet often inspires a productive conversation about important topics and current events. It is a great venue for students who may be too shy to respond to questions in the classroom. Teachers might set up conversations with students using "hashtags" (a word or phrase on social-networking Websites preceded by a hash mark (#), used within a message to identify a topic of interest).
  6. YouTube: Teachers can create a YouTube channel and develop and provide informative videos or slideshows. They can also provide links to relevant YouTube videos.



7. Online documents: Teachers can use Scribd and other social publishing websites to upload online materials to one location. Students can access notes, worksheets, and other things from home with their computer through video. Skype brings guest speakers into the classroom from remote locations. This can certainly add some relevance and interest to the learning experience.

In summary, Facebook, like all other social media, has many potentially positive uses in the classroom. Social media is very much a part of students' everyday lives, and though it can be have its challenges, it can also provide some extremely useful applications that promote the learning process, both in and out of the classroom.

In *Communicating and Connecting with Social Media*, William Ferriter, Jason Ramsden and Eric Sheninger share common patterns of participation that illustrate how teachers and principals can benefit from using social media. The six common patterns of participation are: (1) sharing knowledge and resources, (2) monitoring educational news sources, (3) digitally attending important conferences, (4) encouraging reflection, (5) gathering instant feedback, and (6) mentoring colleagues (Ferriter et al., 2011, pp. 37-38). All of these areas of participation provide educators additional opportunities to learn from others and improve their effectiveness as educators.

An additional idea presented in *Communicating and Connecting with Social Media*, is the importance of educators' starting with one social-media space or one digital professional learning network (PLN). "Once you find a social-media space that seems like a good fit, jump right in and start networking. The more you practice—both with the tools you have chosen and the communication patterns necessary for connecting with others digitally—the more comfortable you will be learning with your 21<sup>st</sup> century PLN" (Ferriter et al., 2011, p. 43).

The use of social media for learning is less than 10 years old, yet the possibilities appear to be almost endless. Regardless of the social media used, educators have many options at their fingertips. The world of social media use is full of promise, and it is up to teachers and school leaders to determine what is best for their students.

***Key Answers Concerning Promising Practices: Why Use Social Media?***

**1. In what ways might teachers use social media to aid students?**

- Help them feel less pressure to answer questions using social media.
- Teach students that they can learn to monitor themselves using social media appropriately.
- Show them how peer interaction may increase, especially across geographic boundaries. Relationships develop globally and cross-culturally.
- Provide them how the number of available interactions increases substantially using social media.
- Provide opportunities for students to become engaged in many different ways.
- Help students write for real audiences and for real purposes.

**2. How might teachers use social media to enhance their own education?**

- Teachers can develop discussion groups on topics using a platform enjoyed by students.
- The resources on social media sites are almost immeasurable, and most are free or low-cost.
- The format encourages an exchange of ideas for students and staff alike.
- Teachers can create and share all types of informative videos, slideshows, and general information.
- Online documents can be shared through all types of social publishing websites.

*Notes & Updates:*

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## **Resource Guide - Chapter 4 - Digital Citizenship: How should you use social media?**

### **Points to Ponder Regarding Digital Citizenship: How Should You Use It?**

1. What is digital citizenship?
2. What do all staff and students need to do in order to be considered good digital citizens?
3. How might each of the nine elements of digital citizenship look when used appropriately?  
Misused? Abused?

—Digital behavior is presently a major issue in the use of social media, and will continue to be in future decades,” writes Dr. Gerald Bailey, author of *Digital Citizenship in Schools* (G. Bailey, personal communication, February 23, 2011). In moving forward with the necessary use of social media in schools, he also emphasizes the need for all staff to understand issues of use, misuse, and abuse of social media on school time. The use is simply the appropriate utilization of social media for its intended purposes. He then compares this to abuse, for example sending hate mail (not on school time, using a privately owned laptop), and how this might be confused by the staff member as not being an issue since it was done off school time with one’s own equipment. Then there is the area of abuse when something inappropriate is done in a more obvious, egregious way. Educators cannot move forward with the appropriate use of digital technologies unless there is consistent teaching of the proper use, avoidance of misuse, and abuse of technology

When Mark Prensky labeled two very different groups of technology users as —digital natives” and —digital immigrants” in an article he authored in 2001, he appropriately identified how very different young people and their use of technology may be in contrast to those others who are somewhat new to it. Because many teachers are still immigrants to this digital world the

natives are so comfortable living in, they must learn how to help these digital natives use it appropriately. Both groups need to increase their ability to be better digital citizens (Prensky, 2001).

In their book, *Digital Citizenship in Schools*, Dr. Mike Ribble and Dr. Gerald Bailey (2007) share nine elements that will help a school prepare itself and its students to be informed digital citizens. “Digital citizenship aims to teach everyone (not just children) what technology users must understand in order to use digital technologies effectively and appropriately” (p. 10). The following nine definitions can help provide a way of understanding digital citizenship and many of the issues surrounding the use, misuse, and abuse of technology (See answers to question number three at the end of this chapter.):

1. Digital access: full electronic participation in society
2. Digital commerce: the buying and selling of goods online
3. Digital communication: the electronic exchange of information
4. Digital literacy: the capacity to use digital technology and knowing when and how to use it
5. Digital etiquette: the standards of conduct expected by other digital technology users
6. Digital law: the legal rights and restrictions governing technology use
7. Digital rights and responsibilities: the privileges and freedoms extended to all digital technology users, and the behavioral expectations that come with them
8. Digital health and wellness: the elements of physical and psychological well-being related to digital technology use
9. Digital security: the precautions that all technology users must take to guarantee their personal safety and the security of their network (Ribble and Bailey, 2007, p. 10).

More and more information is being shared about digital citizenship. Media expert, Professor Henry Jenkins, from the University of Southern California, shared his comments in an interview with the National Education Association entitled, *The Participation Gap* (2008.)

Digital literacy is the new hidden curriculum. In the 1960s, we talked about access to opera, encyclopedias, theaters, museums, and dinner table conversations about culture and world events. The research showed us two things – those with access to this hidden curriculum developed learning skills that enabled them to do better in school. They also developed a style of discourse that prompted teachers to respond to them more positively than the kids without the same experiences. Today, the ability to navigate social networks, play games, or participate in online conversations affects the way young people present themselves to the world. There's an informal learning that takes place as they interact with digital media, which gives way to certain skills, competencies, and literacies.

As Dr. Jenkins stated, digital literacy includes the ability to navigate social networks. In order for students to learn this navigation skill, their teachers and school leaders must lead the way.

In summary, digital citizenship in itself manages the use of social media, and though the use of social media was once looked upon as a fad for the very young, it is now here to stay. There is no time like the present to begin figuring out how to use this new media appropriately, strategically and wisely.



***Key Answers Regarding Digital Citizenship: How Should You Use Social Media?***

**1. What is digital citizenship?**

- Digital citizenship is the norms of behavior all should exhibit when using technology. It includes the following nine elements:
- Digital access: full electronic participation in society
- Digital commerce: the buying and selling of goods online
- Digital communication: the electronic exchange of information
- Digital literacy: the capacity to use digital technology and knowing when and how to use it
- Digital etiquette: the standards of conduct expected by other digital technology users
- Digital law: the legal rights and restrictions governing technology use
- Digital rights and responsibilities: the privileges and freedoms extended to all digital technology users, and the behavioral expectations that come with them
- Digital health and wellness: the elements of physical and psychological well-being related to digital technology use
- Digital security: the precautions that all technology users must take to guarantee their personal safety and the security of their network.

**2. What do all staff and students need to do in order to be considered good digital citizens?**

Staff and students need to be acquainted with these nine elements, reflect on their use, and understand the need to use digital technologies appropriately.

**3. How might each of the nine elements of digital citizenship look when used appropriately? Misused? Abused?**

<b>Digital Citizenship Element</b>	<b>Appropriate Use</b>	<b>Misuse</b>	<b>Abuse</b>
<b>Digital access</b>	School personnel make certain that all students have access to social media	Special needs, low socio-economic students are overlooked	Special needs students are knowingly disregarded.
<b>Digital commerce</b>	Teachers use online purchasing options appropriately	Teachers use too much class time shopping online	Teachers access pornographic sites using district-owned technology
<b>Digital communication</b>	Teachers use plan time to visit with parents via email or texting	Teachers leave their ringers on during class time, causing disruptions	Teachers text inappropriate messages or pictures to students
<b>Digital literacy</b>	Teachers research and learn how to use blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Wikis, ad infinitum.	Teachers create blogs under the name of the school without permission from administration/AUP	Teachers place private student information on a blog, thinking it would stay private
<b>Digital etiquette</b>	Teachers use social media to help students learn about proper use, and provide instruction on appropriate use	A staff member answers his phone loudly in the middle of a staff meeting	Staff members discuss their dislike of a new staff members attire
<b>Digital law</b>	A staff member follows all requirements listed in the acceptable use policy	A staff member downloads a favorite song without buying it, for his own personal use	A staff member downloads songs onto a CD and sells them for a profit
<b>Digital rights &amp; responsibilities</b>	A staff member reports actions of cyberbullies	A staff member cites sources when she has time	A staff member totally disregards the Acceptable Use Policy
<b>Digital health &amp; wellness</b>	A staff member does exercises throughout the day to avoid repetitive injuries to his wrists	A staff member disregards some minor pain in her wrist due to overuse of the computer	A staff member is addicted to Internet pornography and uses the schools computer to hide it from her spouse

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<b>Digital security</b>	A staff member backs up files to a shared drive to ensure its safekeeping	A staff member does not take the time to update network security programs	A staff member is online stalking another staff member via Internet use at school
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*Notes & Updates:*

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## Resource Guide - Chapter 5 - Emergence of Issues and Challenges

### Points to Ponder Regarding the Emergence of Issues and Challenges

1. What do surveys indicate about the future use of social media?
2. What are some benefits of using social media?

School leaders may find themselves responding to staff questions regarding social media use with the following Mark Twain quote: “I was gratified to be able to answer promptly and I did. I said I didn’t know.” Mark Twain’s quote is both humorous and even applicable when one examines all of the possible issues and concerns school leaders have regarding social media. Many times school leaders will need to respond that they do not know the answer; however, they must seek to find the answers necessary to facilitate the proper use of social media by their school staff members.

Nick Bilton connects the differences between the digital natives and digital immigrants with the way they create and share content in his book, *I Live in the Future and Here’s How it Works* (2010). He reflects that digital natives are creative thinkers, but they also have the need to document.

If you watched the inauguration of President Obama in 2009, you will have seen this too. As the president awaited his swearing in, his ten-year-old daughter, Malia Obama, sat behind him taking pictures with her digital camera. There were literally hundreds of thousands of people taking pictures of that event—pictures of Barack Obama would appear on the front page of almost every newspaper and news website around the world—yet his daughter wanted to document the event through her own eyes (p. 94).

This is how the students of today see things and want to experience things, and this is the way in which they will potentially learn best. This is also the way teachers will need to teach, and they will need to do so in the manner that will be best for students and for themselves.

The future of social media was referenced quite powerfully in one of the Pew Research publications, *The Future of Online Socializing*, on July 2, 2010. The survey was conducted with 895 technology stakeholders and critics. Eighty-five percent agreed with the statement: "In 2020, when I look at the big picture and consider my personal friendships, marriage and other relationships, I see that the Internet has mostly been a positive force on my social world. And this will only grow more true in the future" (p. 1).

Only 14 percent agreed with the opposite statement, which posited: "In 2020, when I look at the big picture and consider my personal friendships, marriage and other relationships, I see that the Internet has mostly been a negative force on my social world. And this will only grow more true in the future" (p. 1).

This same survey found that many people are confident that technological advances will continue to revolutionize social relations online. Among the innovations suggested were ~~powerful~~ collaborative visualization decision-based tools . . . and instant thought transmission in a telepathic format" (p. 1). Those surveyed also indicated that, though the tools are changing at a rapid pace, basic human nature is slow to adjust.

Being connected through social media varies significantly with the age of the user. In a Harris Poll conducted with 2,258 adults, 59 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds favored interacting with acquaintances using social media rather than face-to-face. This compared with only 38 percent of 45- to 54-year-olds and just 25 percent of those 55 and older. The younger the users, the more they preferred the use of social media to stay connected with acquaintances. The

results of this survey have future implications: more and more people will not only feel comfortable using social media, but they may also prefer to use it (Harris Poll, 2010).

The birth of social networks may be one of the most significant inventions in the age of technology, and like many of history's great inventions, many will challenge its use, and much will be said about its negative aspects before it is fully embraced by the masses.

In a post on the Mashable website, entitled "The Case for Social Media in Schools," Sarah Kessler shares five main reasons she and many teachers believe schools must embrace this form of communication and learning while still addressing the challenges that many voice against social media:

1. Social media is not going away: The ownership of mobile devices by 8- to 18-year-olds has gone from 39 percent in 2005 to 66 percent in 2010. Interestingly, about half of these same young people said they use media either "most" (31 percent) or "some" (25 percent) of the time while they are doing their homework (Kaiser Study, 2010). Seventy-four percent of all seventh- to twelfth-grade students surveyed said they had at least one profile on a social media site. If they are already using it, why not embrace it in the education process? As Elizabeth Delmatoff, a seventh-grade teacher from Portland, Oregon, says, "It could be a distraction for kids to text their friends during a lecture, just as it would be for them to play cards or to nap" (Kessler, 2010, p. 2).
2. When kids are engaged, they learn better: A third- and fourth-grade teacher in Minnesota, Matt Hardy, describes the "giddy" responses his students show when he has them begin to use blogs. He has utilized blogs in his classes since 2007 as a way to help motivate students to write. He adds, "Blogging was a way to get students into that mode where, 'Hey, I'm writing this not just for an assignment, not just for a teacher, but my friend will



see it and maybe even other people will stumble across it.’ So there is power in that”

(Kessler, 2010, p. 3). Another teacher wrote about how much work the kids put into their blogs. They came to school early to work on their blogs, and the quality of their work increased.

3. Safe social media tools are available—and they’re free: Hardy developed his own platform to avoid some of the pitfalls associated with social media use and students. This platform allowed him to approve and monitor everything his students were posting online. He developed a web-based tool other teachers could use called kidblog.org. It is free, as are other such web-based platforms as Edmodo and Edublogs.
4. Replace online procrastination with social education: A recent Nielson study showed that between 2004 and 2009, children between the ages of 2 and 11 spent 63 percent more time online. Since students are spending so much time online, it behooves educators to incorporate learning into this time. In one example, a teacher posted online an extra assignment for her students to complete every day after school. The assignments would vary from “Comment on one of President Obama’s speeches” to “make a two-minute video about something you saw on your way home which was a bad example of sustainability” (Kessler, 2010, p. 5). It earned the students no extra credit, no reward at all, yet the teacher reported that approximately 100 out of her 125 students consistently participated in some fashion. “They were just as happy to do work rather than talk trash,” Delmatoff says. “All they wanted was to be with their friends” (Kessler, 2010, p. 5).
5. Social media encourages collaboration instead of cliques: Social media is a natural collaborative tool. When students critique and comment on each other’s work, access each other easily, and work in teams to generate content, they are naturally learning to be

good team members. Traditional education methods, such as teacher lectures, do not help students learn skills necessary to be effective collaborators. Also, if an individual is typically a bit introverted, or not considered popular in ways seen as important in middle or high school, online collaboration can completely remove that unfortunate social stigma. Students are seen as valuable members of online learning based purely on whether they have good insights or if they ask good quality questions.

6. Cell phones aren't the enemy: In 2011, Delmatoff reported that her school actually collected cell phone contact information from their students. This contact information could then be used by the staff to communicate with their students. This was done in a time when 69 percent of American high schools had banned cell phone use in schools (Common Sense Media, a nonprofit organization studying the use of technology by children). Delmatoff texted messages to students with attendance issues to remind them to get to school on time. She said her "Texts on Time" increased attendance without costing the school any money. The cell phone is a parent-funded communication channel, and schools need to use it to reach and engage the students (Kessler, 2010, p. 6).

However, Jim Klein, the director of information services and technology for the Saugus, California, Union School District said that educators need to be prepared when moving toward using social media in their schools. "Social media, as with all things public, present risks. School leaders need to not only understand these risks but also to have a plan to mitigate them" (Pascopella & Richardson 2009, p. 49). He mentions providing teachers with the necessary tools to monitor and sustain oversight of what is happening online; it is a "necessary step" to take for younger students especially, as they are being trained to move more into public spaces in the online world. Perhaps most importantly, he reminds the reader that teachers must be trained on

the legal implications of inappropriate use and the need to have a clear policy, one that parents read, understand, and sign, on in-school and out-of-school use of social media tools. Table 1 provides a check-list a school leader could use when facilitating social media use with a school staff (Appendix C):

**Table 1 - School Leader’s Checklist to Facilitate Social Media Use with Staff**

<i>Actions To Be Taken</i>	<i>Person Responsible for Action</i>	<i>Planned Completion Date</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
Understand how the basics of social media work			
Check technology capabilities to sustain social media in the schools			
Get district-level leadership approval			
Ensure social media guidelines are incorporated into the AUP			
Survey staff to determine their understanding and experience using social media			
Determine your informal social media leaders among the staff			
Provide training to staff on social media guidelines along with the AUP			
Offer training to parents on social media guidelines along with the AUP			
Develop system to periodically communicate with staff about social media use (Examples: blog, emails, texts, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)			

A new bill was introduced in August of 2011 which would have formally banned teachers from befriending students on social networking websites like Facebook. The law was seen as an aggressive move toward dictating the interactions educators are allowed in online social spaces.

Missouri Senate Bill 54, also known as the Amy Hestir Student Protection Act, was named for a Missouri student who allegedly had a sexual relationship with an abusive teacher beginning when she was 12. The case, which happened decades ago, went beyond Missouri's statute of limitations and never came to trial. —The law expressly forbade direct, private online contact (or ‘exclusive access’) between social media-savvy youth and their educators. Its

wording may permit teachers to use more transparent platforms like the kind of Facebook pages that businesses and organizations often use” (Cheng, 2011, p. 1).

The law was vetoed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon in October 2011. The governor signed a later bill into law. This new bill required schools to create teacher-student communications policies by March 1, 2012. Yes, as Dr. Wycoff said, this topic is a moving target.

Andrea Lunsford, a professor of rhetoric and writing at Stanford University, writes in the August 2009 *Wired* article that, in the area of writing alone, changes are coming —the likes of which we haven’t seen since Greek civilization.” She does not believe that technology is negatively impacting students’ abilities to write, but that it is actually reviving it. Her research suggests that students are writing in an environment vastly different from that of just one generation ago. According to her five-year study of student writing, where she collected 14, 672 student writing samples—including formal essays, journal entries, emails, chat sessions and blog posts—technology is pushing writing literacy in new directions that educators must begin to understand (Thompson, 2009, pg. 1). She also points to her own Stanford students who are almost always writing for an —audience.” Interestingly, in contrast to some negative expectations, in her research Lunsford could not find a single example of the abbreviated —text speak” in any academic paper turned in by even one of her first-year students.

The issues and challenges of using social media are definitely present, but the question —Does social media really have a future in schools?” might be answered in the following comments by education consultant Tom Vander Ark, as he imagines how social networks will stand at the heart of a student’s learning world, giving him learning opportunities beyond those once considered unimaginable:

Instead of a classroom as a primary organizing principle, social networks will become the primary building block of learning communities (both formal and informal). Smart recommendation engines will queue personalized content. Tutoring, training, and collaboration tools will be applications that run on social networks. New schools will be formed around these capabilities. Teachers in existing schools will adopt free tools yielding viral, bureaucracy-cutting productivity improvement (Vander Ark as cited in Ferriter et al., 2011, p. 69).

The issues and challenges that face users of social media are plentiful. However, the work necessary to help students succeed after school is dependent on how all users of social media meet these issues and challenges. The work will be worth the effort if it benefits students. National Association of Independent Schools President Pat Basset defended doing what it takes to help our students meet their future needs saying, “Schools that are not schools of the future will not be schools in the future.”

*Key Answers Regarding the Emergence of Issues and Challenges.*

**1. What do surveys indicate about the future use of social media?** It is growing dramatically, especially among the 8- to 18-year-olds and the 18- to 34-year-olds.

**2. What are some benefits to using social media?**

- It has staying power.
- It engages students, and engaged students learn better.
- It is available, and is often free.
- Students are already spending a lot of time online.
- It encourages collaboration instead of cliques.
- It can reach lots of students, and it reaches them at almost any time.

*Notes & Updates:*

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## **Resource Guide - Chapter 6 - Avoiding Adverse Employment Actions**

### **Points to Ponder for School Leaders Regarding Employment Actions**

1. Do employers have the legal right to expect employees to use technology appropriately?
2. If a teacher is blogging on issues related to terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining issues, or union association or activity, will the speech potentially be protected?
3. If a school official wishes to investigate a blog posting by a teacher, after determining that the teacher did indeed post information that violated policy or law, what steps should the official take?
4. What five things should a school official consider before disciplining a teacher for online conduct, either on or off duty?
5. What three questions should a school authority consider before disciplining an employee for misuse of technology?

### ***Employer's Rights and Policies***

A large part of a school leader's world is the staff. The following Malcolm Gladwell's quote from the *Tipping Point* is a reminder that there is power in the pushing, especially if the pushing is in the right place: "Look at the world around you. With the slightest push—in just the right place—it can be tipped" (Gladwell, 2002, p. 259). School leaders can push the appropriate use of social media by staff by knowing as much as they can about how it can and should be used.

The following five cases exemplify the employer's right to expect employees to use computers correctly:

1. Madrid v. Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph, 1986 (Colorado). The plaintiff prepared invoices, contract proposals, and business cards on the employer's computer for his private consulting business and was terminated.

2. Leventhal v. Knapek, 2001 (New York). After receiving a complaint about an employee's misuse of state computers, the agency searched the employee's computer and discovered he had a personal tax-preparation program on the office computer. Ultimately he admitted he had copied the tax-preparation software onto his computer and had printed five personal tax returns from it. The employee was suspended for 30 days without pay and demoted two grades.

3. Muick v. Glenayre Electronics, 7th Cir. 2002 (Illinois). This case defended an employer's right to control computers at work. "They did not have to be reasonable conditions; but the abuse of access to workplace computers is so common (workers being prone to use them as media of gossip, titillation, and other entertainment and distraction) that reserving a right of inspection is so far from being unreasonable that the failure to do so might well be thought irresponsible."

4. Thygeson v. U.S. Bancorp, 2004 (Oregon). An employee who was fired for misuse of his employer's computer system brought action against the employer, alleging invasion of privacy based on the employer's monitoring of his personal e-mail and Internet access. The court denied the claim. The court indicated that when an employer has an explicit policy banning personal use of office computers, then monitoring is permitted, and the employee has no reasonable expectation of privacy.

5. Toney v. Independent School District, 2007 (Oklahoma). A tenured teacher's dismissal was upheld for willful neglect of duties as a teacher based in part on his admitted and

proven use of his classroom computer for non-pedagogical purposes. In May of 2003, Toney was instructed that he should not play games on his computer when he was to be teaching his class. A 2005 memorandum to all teachers informed them that their computers should be used for educational purposes only. Then in February of 2006, Toney was placed on a plan of assistance that directed him to refrain from computer use during class time and to refrain from any use of the computer to play card games or other entertainment. The district had installed software on his computer that monitored his computer usage. This software indicated that games were accessed on numerous occasions, and staff reported that they observed Toney accessing games on his computer. He was dismissed from his duties as a teacher (Rasmussen, 2011).

Proofpoint, an Internet security firm, conducted a study in 2010 of companies with 1,000 employees or more. They found that 17 percent of those employers had issues with their employees' use of social media. Eight percent of those companies said they actually had to dismiss an employee due to inappropriate behavior on social media sites. This is double the amount reported the previous year, where only 4 percent indicated they had to terminate someone due to misuse of social media. The study also showed that 45 percent have disciplined an employee for violating multimedia sharing/posting policies; 13 percent of US companies investigated an exposure event involving mobile or Web-based short message services; 17 percent discipline an employee for violating blog or message-board policies" (Ostrow, 2010, p. 1). Proofpoint offered two factors for this increase: employers are more closely monitoring social media sites, and their employees are not using common sense when posting about work life. They continue to make foolish remarks about their employers and to share sensitive corporate information (Ostrow, 2010).

However, potential limitations on discipline do exist about which school districts must be aware. In many states, employee privacy statutes restrict employers from disciplining employees for actions related to their off-duty conduct. Also, in some states labor relations laws promise public employees the right to organize and to bargain collectively with their employers and to participate in other protected concerted goings-on with or without a union. If a teacher is blogging on issues relating to terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining issues, or union association or activity, the speech will potentially be protected by such labor relations statutes (*Konop v. Hawaiian Airlines, Inc.*, 2002).

Another potential protection for online activity might be related to existing “whistleblower” statutes. The federal government, along with most states, offer protection against retaliatory termination of an employee who shares evidence concerning how the employer is breaking a law.

If school officials wish to investigate a blog, they must first review the posting of information or pictures to determine the authenticity and accuracy of the information and whether it violates any set policy or any criminal or civil statute. If it is determined that the information is accurate, and that it violates policy or law, the following steps should be taken:

1. Consider whether the conduct has criminal implications. If the answer is yes, contact law enforcement.
2. Meet with the teacher to go over the circumstances, and if requested, allow the teacher to include union representation, if requested.
3. Share the online information with the teacher, and if the teacher admits to the posting, let him or her know that the investigation will continue with possible disciplinary action resulting.

4. If the teacher denies posting the information, conduct further investigation to substantiate whether he or she actually posted the information, if what is posted is the issue, and if it is as it was originally posted. The officials should look into all of the claims made by the teacher to determine their validity. It will be absolutely necessary to validate that the teacher and not someone else was the actual poster.
5. Next, review the distribution of the content that was posted and the effect the dissemination may have on the teacher's ability to carry out his or her duties.
6. Substantiate whether the posting disrupted the educational environment.
7. Determine if the behavior is remediable or irreparable, and then enforce the proper discipline (Todd, et al., 2008).

Every policy shared with staff should make the users aware that they have no expectation of privacy when using district equipment to create, maintain, or post comments on their blogs or those of others, and that their blogging may be reviewed at any time by school administration. Along with this part of the policy, clear and rational expectations relating to any online, on- or off-duty activities of school staff should be clarified.

The school district has the ability and authority to discipline a teacher for online conduct, whether on or off duty depending on: (1) whether the teacher has tenure; (2) the type of offending behavior, which may be defined by statute; (3) the correlation, or nexus, between the conduct and job performance; (4) the conditions and terms of the collective bargaining agreement; and (5) First Amendment constitutional considerations. (Todd et al., 2008)

The Kansas Association of School Boards indicates that the authority to discipline hinges on the following questions: (1) Is the online conduct disruptive to the teaching environment? (2) Does the conduct negatively affect the teacher's ability to perform his or her job? (3) Is the

teacher capable of being an effective teacher and role model to impressionable students? (Key point: Inappropriate online materials may constitute “immoral” behavior.)

In bringing this resource guide to a close, it seems fitting to share information from the website, *EduDemic: Connecting Higher Ed & Social Media*. Below is its list *The 8 Ways Teachers SHOULD Be Using Facebook*. One could easily substitute the words “social media” for “Facebook” in most of these ideas.

1. Do use it to share presentations and notes with students. Links to different programs can act as an archive of your lessons and also allow others to benefit from your efforts.
2. Do answer questions from students as they are doing their homework. You do not need to be up all hours of the night, just have regular “office” hours on Facebook.
3. Do humanize yourself in the eyes of your students.
4. Do share photos of things your students have done. A little promotion of hard work never hurts.
5. Do find other teachers and exchange ideas, best practices, using #edchat on Twitter, for starters.
6. Do share as much educational information as you can. It is strongly recommended to set up a separate “teacher” account due to Facebook privacy issues.
7. Do join educational groups and actively participate in them.
8. Do use it as a teaching tool, not a way to avoid teaching. Be careful to not get addicted to it and end up avoiding your students.

Hopefully, this resource guide provides the information a school leader needs to feel comfortable pushing staff members toward using social media appropriately and responsibly.

The time to push is now.

*Key Answers for School Leaders Regarding Employment Actions*

**1. Do employers have the legal right to expect employees to use technology appropriately?**

Yes.

**2. If a teacher is blogging on issues related to terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining issues, or union association or activity, will the speech potentially be protected? Yes.**

**3. If a school official wishes to investigate a blog posting by a teacher, after determining that the teacher did indeed post information that violated policy or law, what steps should he or she take?**

1. Consider whether the conduct has criminal implications, and contact law enforcement if it does.
2. Meet with the teacher to go over the circumstances, and if requested, allow the teacher to include union representation, if requested.
3. Share the online information with the teacher, and if the teacher admits to the posting, let him or her know that the investigation will continue with possible disciplinary action resulting.
4. If the teacher denies posting the information, conduct further investigation to substantiate whether he or she actually posted the information, if what is posted is the issue, and if it is as it was originally posted. Officials should look into all claims made by the teacher to check out validity. It is absolutely necessary to validate whether the teacher not someone else was the actual poster.

5. Review the distribution of the content and the effect the dissemination may have on the teacher's ability to carry out his or her duties.
6. Substantiate whether posting disrupted the educational environment.
7. Determine whether the behavior is remediable or irreparable, and enforce proper discipline.

**4. What five things should a school official consider before disciplining a teacher for online conduct, whether on or off duty?**

1. Is the teacher tenured?
2. What type of offending behavior was it, and is it defined by statute?
3. Is there a correlation, or nexus, between the conduct and his or her job performance?
4. What are the conditions and terms of the collective bargaining agreement?
5. Are there additional first amendment constitutional considerations?

**5. According to the Kansas Association of School Boards, what three questions should a school authority consider before disciplining an employee?**

1. Is the online conduct disruptive to the teaching environment?
2. Does the conduct negatively affect the teacher's ability to perform his or her job?
3. Is the teacher capable of being an effective teacher and role model to impressionable students?



*Notes & Updates:*

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## Resource Guide - Appendix A - Definition of Terms

<b>Blogs</b>	It is the shortened term for a weblog, which is a website that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks. The term was first used in 1999 (Merriam-Webster.com).
<b>Emoticon</b>	It is a symbolic picture using keyboard characters. (pcmag.com)
<b>Facebook</b>	Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues (whatis.com).
<b>Instant messaging</b>	It is a means or system for transmitting electronic messages instantly.
<b>Leader's resource guide</b>	It is a written or electronic resource with information such as models, processes, strategies, or tools that help leaders understand paradigms, events, or systems. It guides leaders through concepts and leads to successful implementation of programs (Pownell, 2002, p. 12).
<b>Research and development</b>	They are the applications of research findings to design new products and procedures, followed by the application of research methods to field-test, evaluate and refine products and procedures until they meet specific criteria of effectiveness and (Gall, M., Borg, & Gall, J., 2003).
<b>Sexting</b>	Sexting refers to an act of sending sexually explicit materials through mobile phones. The word is derived from the combination of two terms –sex” and –texting,” according to uslegal.com. (pcmag.com)
<b>Social networking site</b>	A social networking site (SNS) is a website that provides a virtual community for people to share their daily activities with family and friends, or to share their interest in a particular topic, or to increase their circle of acquaintances. Globally, hundreds of millions of people have joined one or more social networking sites (pcmag.com).
<b>Tweets</b>	They are posts made on Twitter’s online message service (merriam-webster.com).
<b>Twitter</b>	It is an instant messaging system that lets a person send brief text messages up to 140 characters in length to a list of followers (pcmag.com).
<b>Web 2.0</b>	A succinct way to describe Web 2.0 websites is that they were made to: (a) depend upon the membership of mass groups of users instead of upon centrally controlled content providers, (b) aggregate content from various sources, and (c) more intensely network users and content together.
<b>Wiki</b>	It is a website that allows anyone to add, delete, or revise content by using a web browser (dictionary.com).

## Resource Guide - Appendix B - Relevant Court Cases

***Ahmad v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago*** (No. 1-04-3695, Supreme Court of Missouri, 2006) In the state of Illinois, a school official determines if the online, off-duty conduct of a teacher is considered “remediable” (conduct subject to discipline short of termination) or “irremediable” (conduct subject to termination).

***Ambach v. Norwick*** (441 U.S. 68, United States Supreme Court, 1979) Teachers are to be considered role models.

***Board of Education of Hopkins County v. Woods*** (458 U.S. 176, United States Supreme Court, 1986) Teachers are held to a standard of personal conduct and are not permitted to commit an immoral or criminal act due to its harmful impression on students.

***Connick v. Myers*** (461 U.S. 38, United States Supreme Court, 1983) The Connick-Pickering test indicates that a teacher may establish that his or her speech is constitutionally protected if: (1) the teacher spoke as a citizen on matter of public concern; and (2) the teacher’s interest as a citizen in commenting upon matters of public concern outweighs the interest of the school district in promoting the efficiency of its public services.

***Garcetti v. Ceballos*** (547 U.S. 410, United States Supreme Court, 2006) Employees’ speech is not protected making statements pursuant to their official duties. When they do this, they are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the *Constitution of the United States* does not insulate their communications from employer discipline.

***Konop v. Hawaiian Airlines*** (302 F.3d 868, 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 2002) If a teacher is blogging on issues relating to terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining issues, or union association or activity, the speech will potentially be protected by such labor relations statutes.

***Leventhal v. Knapek*** (266 F.3d 64, 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 2001) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Court ruled that the government's search of an employee's computer for evidence of suspected work-related misconduct did not violate the employee's rights under the Fourth Amendment.

***Lile v. Hancock Place School District*** (701 S. W. 2d 600, Mo. App. E.D., 1985) A board of education must establish an adequate nexus between inappropriate conduct and the board's justifiable interest in protecting the school community from harm.

***Madrid v. Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph*** (728 P.2d 1299, Colorado Court of Appeals, 1986) The plaintiff prepared invoices, contract proposals and business cards on the employer's computer for his private consulting business and was terminated.

***Mammone v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*** (446 Mass. 657, Supreme Court of Massachusetts, 2006) A university employee was discharged for "egregious misconduct," including creating and distributing information at his workplace about his personal website, which complained about low wages the university paid some employees. He accessed and worked on the website at the workplace.

***Morrison v. State Board of Education*** (1 Cal. 3d 214, California Supreme Court, 1968) This case set up a list of factors to consider when establishing a nexus between a teacher's off-duty conduct and his job.

***Muick v. Glenayre Electronics*** (280 F.3d 741, 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 2002) The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals held that employers have the right to inspect computers because the misuse of access to workplace computers is so prevalent that reserving a right of inspection is very reasonable, and the failure to do so might actually be irresponsible.

***Nickolas v. Fletcher*** (No. 3:06-43-KKC, United States District Court Civil Action, 2008) The state of Kentucky allows employees to access the Internet for work-related reasons for

limited personal use as long as it never interferes with the employee's official duties. This case resulted in a policy change by the state of Kentucky after a survey indicated personal use was leading to a decrease in employee efficiency at work.

***Pickering v. BOE*** (391 U.S. 563, United States Supreme Court, 1968) The Supreme Court held that, absent proof of false statements knowingly or recklessly made, the teachers' exercise of their right to speak out on issues of public concern cannot be used as the basis for dismissal from public employment. The results of this case were further defined in the Connick v. Myers case leading to the information referenced as the Connick-Pickering Test.

***Richerson v. Beckon*** (9<sup>th</sup> Circuit United States Court of Appeals, 2008) An employee's speech was protected due to its being a public concern, but her personal attacks on specific individuals were sufficient reason for her to be disciplined by her employer.

***Roberts v. Ward*** (No. 05-6305, United States 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 2006) There appear to be two types of cases that the Supreme Court limits the employer's right to restrict employee's First Amendment free speech. The first type involves situations where a public employee speaks out concerning the operations of the branch of government for which he or she works, a matter on which he or she is uniquely able to comment on by virtue of their job assignment. And the second type involves government regulation of comments that are not related to the employee's job.

***Snyder v. Millersville*** (Civil Action No. 97-1660, United States Court of Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 2008) Millersville University decided not to award Stacy Snyder her teaching degree, based in part on a picture she posted to her MySpace page showing her doing what appeared to be consuming alcohol and celebrating in a pirate hat. Snyder had attended an orientation process where she was warned not to make inappropriate comments on social

network sites. She was given specific instructions which she then chose not to follow. The university did a thorough job of documenting why her degree was not granted, proving that it was due to poor job performance, and not due to comments made on social network sites.

***Spanierman v. Hughes*** (576 F. Supp. 2d 292, United States District Court for the District of Connecticut, 2008) The Connecticut State Court held that, in part, a teacher's interest in the renewal of his teaching contract was not a protected-property interest under the due-process clause, and unless it is proven that it was protected free speech and relating to a matter of public concern, non-renewal will be upheld. Schools can expect a teacher to maintain a professional, respectful relationship with students.

***Thygeson v. U.S. Bancorp*** (No. CV-03-467-ST, WL 2066746 D.Or., United States District Court, 2004) An employee who was fired for misuse of his employer's computer system brought action against the employer, alleging invasion of privacy based on the employer's monitoring of his personal e-mail and Internet access. The court denied the claim because there was an explicit policy banning personal use of office computers, and it also indicated there would be monitoring of office computers; therefore, employees had no reasonable expectation of privacy.

***Toney v. Independent School District No. I-48 of Hughes County***, (No. CIV-06-455-FHS, 2007 WL 54832 E.D., Oklahoma, 2007) A tenured teacher's dismissal was upheld for willful neglect of duties as a teacher based in part on his admitted and proven use of his classroom computer for non-pedagogical purposes.

**Resource Guide - Appendix C - School Leader’s Checklist to Facilitate Social Media Use with Staff**

<i>Actions To Be Taken</i>	<i>Person Responsible for Action</i>	<i>Planned Completion Date</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
Understand how the basics of social media work			
Check technology capabilities to sustain social media in the schools			
Get district-level leadership approval			
Ensure social media guidelines are incorporated into the AUP			
Survey staff to determine their understanding and experience using social media			
Determine your informal social media leaders among the staff			
Provide training to staff on social media guidelines along with the AUP			
Offer training to parents on social media guidelines along with the AUP			
Develop system to periodically communicate with staff about social media use (Examples: blog, emails, texts, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)			



## **Resource Guide - Appendix D – Points to Ponder and Answers for All Chapters**

### **Chapter 1 - Key Answers for School Leaders Concerning Social Media**

**1. What is social media?** –Social media is digital content and interaction that is created by and between people.” (Cohen, May 2011, p. 1)

**2. How is it being used by students, teachers, and school leaders?** Student uses: learning tools, communication, collaboration, socializing, sharing of ideas, and free resources. Teacher uses: accountability to stakeholders, learning tools, communication, collaboration, professional development, student engagement, sharing of ideas, and free resources. School leader uses: accountability to stakeholders, learning tools, communication, collaboration, professional development, student engagement, sharing of ideas, and free resources.

**3. Why do school leaders need to know about the use of social media in schools?** They need to provide the visionary leadership on how social media should be used and provide the proper modeling of its use. They need to understand the social, ethical and legal issues and responsibilities surrounding the use of social media by school staff.

**4. What are a few examples of appropriate use of social media by school staff members?** Examples of appropriate use of social media by school staff members would include: proper collaboration with other educators, sharing of information with stakeholders, engaging activities with students, and communication with students, peers and school leaders.

**5. Describe a few instances when social media might be misused by school staff members.** Examples of how social media might be misused by school staff members would include: too much or not enough collaboration with educators, the sharing of too much or not enough information with stakeholders, creating activities which do not engage students, communicating too much or not enough with students, peers and school leaders.

**6. Name a few examples of how social media can be abused by school staff members.** This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2, and will include abuse due to infringing on rights of privacy, and other illegal uses of social media by school staff.

### **Chapter 2 Key Answers Regarding Social Media Use by Staff in P-12 Education**

**1. What should school leaders and staff members know about student privacy?** School leaders need to know that students may not be as concerned about privacy as they should be. Staff members must know what student privacy laws are. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): (1) defines what students, parents and third parties have the right to know; (2) who records can be shared with; (3) how amendments to records can be made; (4) who must be made aware of their rights; and (5) how these records must be kept.

**2. How far do the privacy rights of staff members go?** Staff members need to know that their privacy rights are not absolute. They have some privacy rights, but typically the courts have not

defended that right when or if it affects their ability to carry out their teaching responsibilities. A rule of thumb seems to be that if teachers want their private lives to be respected they will need to keep them private and never post information they want to stay confidential onto any type of social media.

**3. What is the “role model” expectation of educators?** This expectation was presented in Thomas Dewey’s writings in 1909 when he wrote that teachers “actions, words, and so on carry a moral significance in themselves. . . teachers act as moral agents all the time, unconsciously.” They were legally defended by the United States Supreme Court in the 1979 case of *Ambach v. Norwick*, when Justice Lewis Powell wrote, “A teacher serves as a role model for his students, exerting a subtle but important influence over their perceptions and values.”

**4. What needs to happen for a nexus to be shown concerning a staff member’s abuse of social media?** A nexus, or connection, between the educator’s actions and the result of those actions on the students may be established by the considering the following:

- Is there likelihood that the conduct may adversely affect students or fellow teachers?
- Was the degree of such impact anticipated?
- When did the actions take place?
- What are the extenuating or aggravating circumstances?
- Are the motives praiseworthy or blameless?
- What impact would disciplinary action have on the constitutional rights of the teacher?
- Did the conduct involve a student or school-aged individual?
- Was the act broadly publicized?
- Did the event take place in public, removing the teacher’s right to privacy?

**5. What makes a teacher’s right to free speech constitutionally protected?** Free speech constitutional protection may be established by answering the following questions:

- Is the teacher addressing matters of public concern?
- Is the teacher acting pursuant to his or her responsibilities as a teacher?
- Did the teacher’s actions breach the privacy of another staff member or student?
- Did the teacher’s actions cause a disruption to the school environment or the teacher’s ability to perform his or her duties?

### **Chapter 3 Key Answers Concerning Promising Practices: Why Use Social Media?**

#### **1. In what ways might teachers use social media to aid students?**

- Help them feel less pressure to answer questions using social media.
- Teach students that they can learn to monitor themselves using social media appropriately.
- Show them how peer interaction may increase, especially across geographic boundaries. Relationships develop globally and cross-culturally.
- Provide them how the number of available interactions increases substantially using social media.
- Provide opportunities for students to become engaged in many different ways.
- Help students write for real audiences and for real purposes.

**2. How might teachers use social media to enhance their own education?**

- Teachers can develop discussion groups on topics using a platform enjoyed by students.
- The resources on social media sites are almost immeasurable, and most are free or low-cost.
- The format encourages an exchange of ideas for students and staff alike.
- Teachers can create and share all types of informative videos, slideshows, and general information.
- Online documents can be shared through all types of social publishing websites.

**Chapter 4 Key Answers Regarding Digital Citizenship: How Should You Use Social Media?**

**1. What is digital citizenship?**

- Digital citizenship is the norms of behavior all should exhibit when using technology. It includes the following nine elements:
- Digital Access: full electronic participation in society
- Digital Commerce: the buying and selling of goods online
- Digital Communication: the electronic exchange of information
- Digital literacy: the capacity to use digital technology and knowing when and how to use it
- Digital Etiquette: the standards of conduct expected by other digital technology users
- Digital Law: the legal rights and restrictions governing technology use
- Digital Rights and Responsibilities: the privileges and freedoms extended to all digital technology users, and the behavioral expectations that come with them
- Digital Health and Wellness: the elements of physical and psychological well-being related to digital technology use
- Digital Security: the precautions that all technology users must take to guarantee their personal safety and the security of their network.

**2. What do all staff and students need to do in order to be considered good digital citizens?**

Staff and students need to be acquainted with these nine elements, reflect on their use, and understand the need to use digital technologies appropriately.

**3. How might each of the nine elements of digital citizenship look when used appropriately? Misused? Abused?**

<b>Digital Citizenship Element</b>	<b>Appropriate Use</b>	<b>Misuse</b>	<b>Abuse</b>
<b>Digital access</b>	School personnel make certain that all students have access to social media	Special needs, low socio-economic students are overlooked	Special needs students are knowingly disregarded.
<b>Digital commerce</b>	Teachers use online purchasing options appropriately	Teachers use too much class time shopping online	Teachers access pornographic sites using district-owned technology
<b>Digital communication</b>	Teachers use plan time to visit with parents via email or texting	Teachers leave their ringers on during class time, causing disruptions	Teachers text inappropriate messages or pictures to students
<b>Digital literacy</b>	Teachers research and learn how to use blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Wikis, ad infinitum.	Teachers create blogs under the name of the school without permission from administration/AUP	Teachers place private student information on a blog, thinking it would stay private
<b>Digital etiquette</b>	Teachers use social media to help students learn about proper use, and provide instruction on appropriate use	A staff member answers his phone loudly in the middle of a staff meeting	Staff members discuss their dislike of a new staff members attire
<b>Digital law</b>	A staff member follows all requirements listed in the acceptable use policy	A staff member downloads a favorite song without buying it, for his own personal use	A staff member downloads songs onto a CD and sells them for a profit
<b>Digital rights &amp; responsibilities</b>	A staff member reports actions of cyberbullies	A staff member cites sources when she has time	A staff member totally disregards the Acceptable Use Policy
<b>Digital health &amp; wellness</b>	A staff member does exercises throughout the day to avoid repetitive injuries to his wrists	A staff member disregards some minor pain in her wrist due to overuse of the computer	A staff member is addicted to Internet pornography and uses the schools computer to hide it from her spouse
<b>Digital security</b>	A staff member backs up files to a shared drive to ensure its safekeeping	A staff member does not take the time to update network security programs	A staff member is online stalking another staff member via Internet use at school

**Chapter 5 Key Answers Regarding the Emergence of Issues and Challenges.**

**1. What do surveys indicate about the future use of social media?** It is growing dramatically, especially among the 8- to 18-year-olds and the 18- to 34-year-olds.

**2. What are some benefits to using social media?**

- It has staying power.
- It engages students, and engaged students learn better.
- It is available, and is often free.
- Students are already spending a lot of time online.
- It encourages collaboration instead of cliques.
- It can reach lots of students, and it reaches them at almost any time.

**Chapter 6 - Key Answers for School Leaders Regarding Employment Actions**

**1. Do employers have the legal right to expect employees to use technology appropriately?**

Yes.

**2. If a teacher is blogging on issues related to terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining issues, or union association or activity, will the speech potentially be protected?** Yes.

**3. If a school official wishes to investigate a blog posting by a teacher, after determining that the teacher did indeed post information that violated policy or law, what steps should he or she take?**

- Consider whether the conduct has criminal implications, and contact law enforcement if it does.
- Meet with the teacher to go over the circumstances, and if requested, allow the teacher to include union representation, if requested.
- Share the online information with the teacher, and if the teacher admits to the posting, let him or her know that the investigation will continue with possible disciplinary action resulting.
- If the teacher denies posting the information, conduct further investigation to substantiate whether he or she actually posted the information, if what is posted is the issue, and if it is as it was originally posted. Officials should look into all claims made by the teacher to check out validity. It is absolutely necessary to validate whether the teacher not someone else was the actual poster.
- Review the distribution of the content and the effect the dissemination may have on the teacher's ability to carry out his or her duties.
- Substantiate whether posting disrupted the educational environment.
- Determine whether the behavior is remediable or irreparable, and enforce proper discipline.

**4. What five things should a school official consider before disciplining a teacher for online conduct, whether on or off duty?**

- 1) Is the teacher tenured?

- 2) What type of offending behavior was it, and is it defined by statute?
- 3) Is there a correlation, or nexus, between the conduct and his or her job performance?
- 4) What are the conditions and terms of the collective bargaining agreement?
- 5) Are there additional first amendment constitutional considerations?

**5. According to the Kansas Association of School Boards, what three questions should a school authority consider before disciplining an employee?**

- 1) Is the online conduct disruptive to the teaching environment?
- 2) Does the conduct negatively affect the teacher's ability to perform his or her job?
- 3) Is the teacher capable of being an effective teacher and role model to impressionable students?

## Chapter 5 - Conclusions

### Introduction

Chapter 5 summarizes the research and development activities used to create the *School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff*. This chapter also presents the research questions and results, reflections, conclusions, dissemination, and recommendations for future research from this study

### Summary of Activities

The purpose of this study was to research, develop, test, and validate a resource guide for school leaders to use to facilitate social media use by their staff members. The research and development methodology developed by Gall, Borg, and Gall (2003) was adapted and used for this study (see Figure 2).

An extensive review of the literature ensued from the spring of 2010 through the spring of 2011. The research analysis, needs assessment, and proof of concept for the *School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff* was conducted in the fall of 2011. The researcher identified a need at that time, and proceeded to conduct information gathering and additional review of the literature through December, 2011. During this same time, a prototype for the resource guide was developed. The Preliminary Field Test was conducted in December, 2011 and January, 2012 with five individuals who were either (a) recognized as an expert in the area of social media use in education, (b) a practitioner, specifically a teacher, presently using social media with P-12 students, or (c) a school leader presently using social media. Revisions were made based on comments and suggestions from the Preliminary Field Test experts in January, 2012. The Main Field Test was conducted in

February and March, 2012 with five experts who were either (a) recognized as an expert in the area of social media use in education, (b) a practitioner, specifically a teacher, presently using social media with P-12 students, (c) a school leader presently using social media, or (d) an individual who was nominated by one of the experts from the Preliminary Field Test phase.

Revisions were made to the final resource guide based on recommendations from the Main Field Test experts in March, 2012.

### **Research Questions and Results**

The purpose of this study was to research, develop, test, and validate a handbook for school leaders to facilitate social media use by their staff members. The following research questions were established and answered:

What information do school leaders need to know to effectively facilitate the use of social media by school staff?

Throughout each stage of the R & D process, including the review of the literature, research analysis, needs assessment questionnaire responses, and proof of concept proposed table of contents feedback, the data gathered indicated there was a need for school leaders to have more resources to help them facilitate staff use of social media. The research indicated that school leaders need to know more about how staff members are using social media. It also showed that school leaders need to know their role in determining if staff members are misusing or abusing social media (Todd et al., 2008). School leaders need to know when staff members are exceeding their rights in appropriately using social media both on- and off-campus, whether on- or off-contract time (Hope, 2005; McCullagh, 2010). They need to understand the legal requirement for teachers to be role models (Davison et al., 2003). They must also have a firm grasp on when there is a nexus between what the teachers are doing and how those actions may



connect with their ability to be an effective teacher (Davison et al., 2003; Dunklee & Shoop, 2006; Whitson, 1991).

The research also indicated school leaders need to know the importance of being proactive. They need to be the ones leading the way in facilitating staff development on digital citizenship so that staff members know the right way to use social media (Jenkins, 2008; Prensky, 2001; Ribble & Bailey, 2007). Social media use is on the increase, and from all the research reviewed it shows no sign of slowing down in the near future (Martin, 2011; PBS Survey, 2010). School leaders must stay apprised of promising practices in the field of social media use in P-12 education (Christensen et al., 2008; Dessoiff, 2010; Devaney, 2010, August; Devaney, 2010, May; Larson et al., 2009). They must keep abreast of issues and challenges associated with social media use in education (Bilton, 2010; Blake-Plock, 2009). This resource guide was developed with these key ideas in mind.

What type of resource guide would help school leaders facilitate the use of social media by school staff?

The research resulted in the development of a resource guide for school leaders to utilize when facilitating the use of social media with their staff members. The process used in creating this resource guide was determined by information gathered from studying the literature, needs assessment questionnaires, proof of concept comments, preliminary field test results, and main field test results. The *School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff* is the result of these steps. Experts in both the preliminary and main field tests indicated that the resource guide was informative, thorough, and necessary.

## **Reflections**

When the researcher began this dissertation process in 2008, she thought this was a necessary topic to study due to her experience as a building-level administrator. However, during the four years since the beginning of this process, the researcher has had the opportunity to be both a district-level curriculum director as well as a director of human resources. Those latter roles have further reinforced the researcher's strong belief in the need for this type of research and development of a product which school leaders can use to facilitate proper social media use by staff members.

Over the past four years, the researcher utilized most of the information presented in this resource guide through dozens of presentations to staff members both in and out of her school district. She has also witnessed the negative impact on staff members who misuse or abuse social media. Some of those negative impacts included terminated and incarceration. School leaders must be able to be proactive and communicate expectations of social media use thereby assisting their employees, helping them avoid the misuse and abuse of social media.

The researcher was continually surprised by the amount of information being provided to her by individuals from all over the world. She received dozens of articles from people via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and emails. Often she would receive updates from those same individuals. Bloggers contacted her, asking her to comment on specific topics they had posted on their blogs. This research literally opened up a whole new communication world to her.

Many school leaders within the researcher's county have already benefited from the strategies and ideas presented in this resource guide prior to the actual presentation of this dissertation. While concluding the dissertation process over the beginning of 2012, the

researcher has gained the reputation as a resident expert on this topic and was thankful for having both the research understanding and practical know-how to create a usable product.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to develop a resource guide for school leaders to use in the area of staff use of social media. The following research objectives were met: (a) examine the literature and get feedback from social media experts to establish current practices and the need for such a product; (b) decide what type of information needs to be shared with school leaders in the area of social media use by school staff; (c) develop a design for school leaders to use to facilitate social media use by school staff; and (d) create a resource guide for school leaders to use to help facilitate social media use by their school staff members.

### **Dissemination**

A necessary step in the research and development methodology is the dissemination of the resource guide after both the preliminary and main field testing and revisions have been accomplished. The information developed for the resource guide may be disseminated in various ways:

1. The resource guide could be made available online as an open access document.
2. The resource guide could be developed into a dynamic and interactive website.
3. The resource guide could be made available to current and aspiring building leaders when studying school law and the impact of social media use by staff members. The information contained in the resource guide can help these current and aspiring building leaders understand the roles and responsibilities they hold in the area of social media use, misuses, and abuse by school staff members.

4. The researcher was approached by Dr. Steve Wycoff, the chief innovation officer at ESSDACK, to allow their in-house publisher to work with the researcher to publish sections of the resource guide online in either a wiki-type format or a blog.
5. The researcher was invited to share a copy of the completed resource guide with the Kansas Association of School Boards and was requested to present the resource guide at one of their seminars.
6. The researcher plans on working with ESSDACK and their in-house publisher to create a wiki-type format or blog with the information from the resource guide.
7. Additionally, the researcher will produce the resource guide in a more concise version to be used when making presentations to building leaders who are interested in learning more about how they can work to safely facilitate the use of social media with their staff members.
8. Finally, the researcher plans on securing the help of a digitally gifted secondary school student to help create a dynamic, interactive website using the information found in the resource guide.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The following are recommendations for future studies in the area of school leaders facilitating social media use by staff members:

The responsibilities held by school leaders can be overwhelming. The additional issues brought into the schools due to misuse and abuse of social media adds to this load. Though many school leaders are not utilizing social media in their schools, it is going to be necessary that they do so (Ferriter et al., 2011). Research questions could consist of the following: What is necessary for school leaders to feel comfortable learning to use social media? What are the

reasons school leaders do not embrace the use of social media? What can be done to reduce those reasons for why school leaders do not embrace the use of social media? What types of staff development are necessary to bring staff members into properly using social media as both a collaborative instrument and a learning tool?

Another research recommendation could be to study ways to implement the use of this type resource guide. How do you get school leaders to use it? What type of action plan would best suit implementing the use of social media in a school setting?

Future research could be done on this type of product development while working with a publisher or marketing company. A future researcher could study how this type of product could best be disseminated to school leaders to best ensure expeditious availability. The researcher could also look at how this could be distributed in a format lending to constant updates due to the dynamic nature of social media use.

Research could also be done on the usability of resource guides in paper format versus those broken into smaller parts and submitted in a wiki, blog, or website type formats. Topics which have such a short shelf-life would likely be better presented in a dynamic format. Perhaps this would be a timely research topic due to the impact of the fast-paced Information Age on various areas of education.

### **Summary**

With the emergence of social media into the world of education, school leaders need to understand their role in how they should address the use, misuse, and abuse of social media both on- and off-school grounds, and in- and off-contract time. School leaders have the right to get involved, and need to know how to exercise this right. They must know how to facilitate the use of social media by their staff members. This resource guide provides school leaders the

necessary background information, as well as specific guidelines on what they need to do. As the use of social media grows exponentially among staff members, this type of guide provides timely information and tools a school leader needs to be effective in this leadership area. This valuable resource guide provides school leaders with the following areas: (1) general information about social media; (2) ways it is being used by staff members both appropriately and inappropriately; (3) promising practices on ways it should be used; (4) an understanding of digital citizenship; (5) a look into the emergence of future issues and challenges, and (6) ways to avoid adverse employment actions. This resource guide provides a thorough look into the use of social media by school staff members, and it provides school leaders with practical ideas and easily accessible resources to use to address present challenges and those that will potentially happen in the future.

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## Appendix A - Definition of Terms

<b>Blogs</b>	It is the shortened term for a weblog, a website that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks. The term was first used in 1999 (Merriam-Webster.com).
<b>Emoticon</b>	It is a symbolic picture using keyboard characters. (pcmag.com)
<b>Facebook</b>	Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues (whatis.com).
<b>Hashtag</b>	It is a word or phrase on social-networking Websites preceded by a hash mark (#), used within a message to identify a topic of interest (dictionary.com).
<b>Instant messaging</b>	It is a means or system for transmitting electronic messages instantly.
<b>Leader’s resource guide</b>	A written or electronic resource with information such as models, processes, strategies, or tools that help leaders understand paradigms, events, or systems. It guides leaders through concepts and leads to successful implementation of programs (Pownell, 2002, p. 12).
<b>Research and development</b>	The applications of research findings to design new products and procedures, followed by the application of research methods to field-test, evaluate and refine products and procedures until they meet specific criteria of effectiveness and (Gall, M., Borg, & Gall, J., 2003).
<b>Sexting</b>	Sexting refers to an act of sending sexually explicit materials through mobile phones. The word is derived from the combination of two terms sex and texting, according to uslegal.com. (pcmag.com)
<b>Social networking site</b>	A social networking site (SNS) is a website that provides a virtual community for people to share their daily activities with family and friends, or to share their interest in a particular topic, or to increase their circle of acquaintances. Globally, hundreds of millions of people have joined one or more social sites (pcmag.com).
<b>Tweets</b>	They are posts made on Twitter’s online message service (merriam-webster.com).
<b>Twitter</b>	An instant messaging system that lets a person send brief text messages up to 140 characters in length to a list of followers (pcmag.com).
<b>Web 2.0</b>	A succinct way to describe Web 2.0 websites is that they were made to: (a) depend upon the membership of mass groups of users instead of upon centrally controlled content providers, (b) aggregate content from various sources, and (c) more intensely network users and content together.
<b>Wiki</b>	It is a website that allows anyone to add, delete, or revise content by using a web browser (dictionary.com).



## Appendix B - Relevant Court Cases

***Ahmad v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago*** (No. 1-04-3695, Supreme Court of Missouri, 2006) In the State of Illinois, a school official determines if the online, off-duty conduct of a teacher is considered “remediable” (conduct subject to discipline short of termination) or “irremediable” (conduct subject to termination).

***Ambach v. Norwick*** (441 U.S. 68, United States Supreme Court, 1979) Teachers are to be considered role models.

***Board of Education of Hopkins County v. Woods*** (458 U.S. 176, United States Supreme Court, 1986) – Teachers are held to a standard of personal conduct and are not permitted to commit an immoral or criminal act due to its harmful impression on students.

***Connick v. Myers*** (461 U.S. 38, United States Supreme Court, 1983) The Connick-Pickering test indicates that a teacher may establish that his or her speech is constitutionally protected if: (1) the teacher spoke as a citizen on matter of public concern; and (2) the teacher’s interest as a citizen in commenting upon matters of public concern outweighs the interest of the school district in promoting the efficiency of its public services.

***Garcetti v. Ceballos*** (547 U.S. 410, United States Supreme Court, 2006) Employees’ speech is not protected when they make statements pursuant to their official duties. When they do this, they are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the *Constitution of the United States* does not insulate their communications from employer discipline.

***Konop v. Hawaiian Airlines*** (302 F.3d 868, 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 2002) If a teacher is blogging on issues relating to terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining issues, or union association or activity, the speech will potentially be protected by such labor relations statutes.

***Leventhal v. Knapek*** (266 F.3d 64, 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 2001) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Court ruled that the government's search of its employee's computer for evidence of suspected work-related misconduct did not violate the employee's rights under the Fourth Amendment.

***Lile v. Hancock Place School District*** (701 S. W. 2d 600, Mo. App. E.D., 1985) A board of education must establish an adequate nexus between inappropriate conduct and the board's justifiable interest in protecting the school community from harm.

***Madrid v. Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph*** (728 P.2d 1299, Colorado Court of Appeals, 1986) The plaintiff prepared invoices, contract proposals and business cards on the employer's computer for his private consulting business and was terminated.

***Mammone v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*** (446 Mass. 657, Supreme Court of Massachusetts, 2006) A university employee was discharged for "egregious misconduct," including creating and distributing information at his workplace about his personal website, which complained about low wages the university paid some employees. He accessed and worked on the website at the workplace.

***Morrison v. State Board of Education*** (1 Cal. 3d 214, California Supreme Court, 1968) This case set up a list of factors to consider when establishing a nexus between a teacher's off-duty conduct and his job.

***Muick v. Glenayre Electronics*** (280 F.3d 741, 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 2002) The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals held that employers have the right to inspect computers because the misuse of access to workplace computers is so prevalent that reserving a right of inspection is very reasonable, and the failure to do so might actually be irresponsible.

***Nickolas v. Fletcher*** (No. 3:06-43-KKC, United States District Court Civil Action, 2008) The state of Kentucky allows employees to access the Internet for work-related reasons for

limited personal use as long as it never interferes with the employee's official duties. This case resulted in a policy change by the state of Kentucky after a survey indicated personal use was leading to a decrease in employee efficiency at work.

***Pickering v. BOE*** (391 U.S. 563, United States Supreme Court, 1968) The Supreme Court held that, absent proof of false statements knowingly or recklessly made, the teachers' exercise of their right to speak out on issues of public concern cannot be used as the basis for dismissal from public employment. The results of this case were further defined in the *Connick v. Myers* case leading to the information referenced as the Connick-Pickering Test.

***Richerson v. Beckon*** (9<sup>th</sup> Circuit United States Court of Appeals, 2008) An employee's speech was protected due to its being a public concern, but her personal attacks on specific individuals were sufficient reason for her to be disciplined by her employer.

***Roberts v. Ward*** (No. 05-6305, United States 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 2006) There appear to be two types of cases that the Supreme Court limits the employer's right to restrict employee's First Amendment free speech. The first type involves situations where a public employee speaks out concerning the operations of the branch of government for which he or she works, a matter on which he or she is uniquely able to comment on by virtue of their job assignment. And the second type involves government regulation of comments that are not related to the employee's job.

***Snyder v. Millersville*** (Civil Action No. 97-1660, United States Court of Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 2008) Millersville University decided not to award Stacy Snyder her teaching degree, based in part on a picture she posted to her MySpace page showing her doing what appeared to be consuming alcohol and celebrating in a pirate hat. Snyder had attended an orientation process where she was warned not to make inappropriate comments on social

network sites. She was given specific instructions which she then chose not to follow. The university did a thorough job of documenting why her degree was not granted, proving that it was due to poor job performance, and not due to comments made on social network sites.

***Spanierman v. Hughes*** (576 F. Supp. 2d 292, United States District Court for the District of Connecticut, 2008) The Connecticut State Court held that, in part, a teacher's interest in the renewal of his teaching contract was not a protected-property interest under the due-process clause, and unless it is proven that it was protected free speech and relating to a matter of public concern, non-renewal will be upheld. Schools can expect a teacher to maintain a professional, respectful relationship with students.

***Thygeson v. U.S. Bancorp*** (No. CV-03-467-ST, WL 2066746 D.Or., United States District Court, 2004) An employee who was fired for misuse of his employer's computer system brought action against the employer, alleging invasion of privacy based on the employer's monitoring of his personal e-mail and Internet access. The court denied the claim because there was an explicit policy banning personal use of office computers, and it also indicated there would be monitoring of office computers; therefore, employees had no reasonable expectation of privacy.

***Toney v. Independent School District, 2007*** (No. CIV-06-455-FHS, 2007 WL 54832 E.D., Oklahoma, 2007) A tenured teacher's dismissal was upheld for willful neglect of duties as a teacher based in part on his admitted and proven use of his classroom computer for non-pedagogical purposes.

## Appendix C - Questionnaire for Needs Assessment

- 1) What are the overall issues concerning the use of Social Media in schools?
- 2) What are the emerging problems associated with the use of Social Media? Greatest benefit?
- 3) How great is the need for a resource guide for school leaders to use to help them facilitate the proper use of social media by their school staff?
- 4) What are the critical things school leaders should know about the use of Social Media by their teachers?
- 5) What do you foresee as the greatest challenge for school leaders regarding this topic?
- 6) How important is it for school leaders to be adept at understanding the use of Social Media in schools? Is it their charge, or someone else's?
- 7) What can teachers do/not do concerning the use of Social Media? Is there enough data to make sense of it yet?
- 8) How might a district benefit from having this information available for their school leaders?
- 9) What sources exist which deal specifically with this topic?
- 10) What research sources and databases/keywords should I be using?
- 11) What additional questions were you expecting me to ask concerning what school leaders should know in relation to the use of social media in schools?

## **Appendix D - Proof of Concept Proposed Table of Contents**

### **School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff**

#### ***Introduction***

Who Should Use this Resource Guide?

How Should You Use this Resource Guide?

#### ***Chapter 1: Social Media:***

The Definition of social media

Increased use by students, teachers and school leaders

The need for school leaders to facilitate its use

The toolbox metaphor: Use, misuse and abuse

#### ***Chapter 2: Social Media Use by Staff in P-12 Education:***

First Amendment Issues: Privacy Concerns

First Amendment Issues: Free Speech Concerns

Facebook/My Space and Relevant Court Cases

Blogging/Websites and Relevant Court Cases

Twitter, Instant, Text Messaging, Sexting and Relevant Court Cases

#### ***Chapter 3: Promising Practices: Why should you use it?***

Successful ways Teachers are using Social Media

Patterns of Participation in Social Media Use by Teachers and Principals

#### ***Chapter 4: Digital Citizenship: How should you use it?***

Definition of Digital Citizenship

Digital Citizenship: Need to Know for Staff

#### ***Chapter 5: Emergence of Issues/Challenges***

Future Use of Social Media

Benefits of Social Media Use

#### ***Chapter 6: Avoiding Adverse Employment Actions***

Important information all Staff Member Should Know

Employer's Rights and Policies

## Appendix E - Institutional Review Board Documentation



University Research Compliance Office

TO: Robert Shoop  
Educational Leadership  
203 Leadership Studies

Proposal Number: 6045

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair   
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: November 7, 2011

RE: Proposal Entitled, "Research, Development, and Validation of a School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff"

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is EXEMPT from further IRB review. This exemption applies only to the proposal - as written - and currently on file with the IRB. Any change potentially affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Based upon information provided to the IRB, this activity is exempt under the criteria set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 CFR §46.101, paragraph b, category: 2, subsection: ii.

Certain research is exempt from the requirements of HHS/OHRP regulations. A determination that research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and assurance of compliance do not apply to the research.

Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

## Appendix F - Informed Consent Form

My participation in this study is purely voluntary. I understand that my refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled and that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty of loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

Research and development projects require feedback from professionals and the acknowledgment of those professionals in the support documents. I understand that I am considered a professional in the field and my contribution will be recognized in the finished dissertation.

If I have questions about the rationale or method of the student, I understand that I may contact:

Deanna Gooch  
Unified School District 266  
11611 West  
Maize, Kansas 67205  
316-350-2029  
dgooch@usd266.com

Dr. Robert Shoop  
Kansas State University  
203 Leadership Studies Building  
Manhattan, Kansas 66506  
785-532-5533  
rshoop@ksu.edu

If I have questions about the rights of subjects in this study or about the manner in which the study is conducted, I may contact the Chairperson of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, at 785-532-3224.

*Please make a copy of this form and keep for your records.*

---

Printed Name

---

Signature

---

Date



## Appendix G - Preliminary Field Test Instructions

November xx, 2011

Thank you very much for agreeing to be a preliminary field test reviewer for “A School Leader’s Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff.” Your reactions and input will provide the needed feedback for improving the resource guide and to make it more useful.

I am sending you the following materials:

1. A copy of “A School Leader’s Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff” for review and evaluation;
2. A three page evaluation form;
3. A consent form;
4. A self-addressed stamped envelope to return the evaluation and the consent form.

Individuals have requested that I send a hard copy of the resource guide for ease in reading. However, if you would prefer an electronic copy, please email me at [dgooch@usd266.com](mailto:dgooch@usd266.com) and I will accommodate your request.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please complete the evaluation form with your responses while reviewing the handbook.
2. Sign the consent form.
3. Return the **consent form** and the **evaluation form** in the self-addressed envelope.

I respectfully request that you return the signed consent form and the completed evaluation form by November xx, 2011. The resource guide is yours to keep. However, if you have made comments on the resource guide and wish to send it to me, please contact me so that I may make arrangements to send you a postage paid envelope.

Thanks again for helping me with the field test portion of the research. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call me at 316-519-6134 or 316-350-2029.

Sincerely,

Deanna L. Gooch

## Appendix H - Preliminary Field Test Evaluation Form

### Evaluation Form for *A School Leader's Resource Guide for the Use of Social Media by School Staff*

This evaluation has three sections:

**Section One** – Evaluation of the format of the resource guide (organization, layout, etc.)

**Section Two** – Evaluation of the content of the resource guide (quality, relevance of content etc.)

**Section Three** – Specific comments about information and pages in the handbook

#### **Section One – Format of the Resource Guide**

Rate the following characteristics of the resource guide on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

		<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Excellent</b>					
1. Content presented in a logical order	1	2	3	4	5
2. Organization of content	1	2	3	4	5
3. Readability of the text	1	2	3	4	5
4. Appropriate grammar and vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
5. Overall usability	1	2	3	4	5

**Please answer the following questions with as much detail as you feel is necessary:**

6. What corrections should be made in the writing and format of the guide?
  
7. What suggestions do you have for making the text more understandable or clear?

**Section Two – Content of the Resource Guide**

Rate the following characteristics of the handbook on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
8. Practicality of the handbook	1	2	3	4	5
9. Content based on current research	1	2	3	4	5
10. Relevance of the content	1	2	3	4	5
11. Resource guide provides new information	1	2	3	4	5
12. Overall content quality	1	2	3	4	5

**Please answer the following questions in as much detail as you feel is needed:**

13. What parts of the content do you feel would be the most helpful to school leaders? What parts would be least helpful?

14. What are the **strengths** of *A School Leader’s Resource Guide for the Use of Social Media by School Staff*?

15. What are the **weaknesses** of *A School Leader's Resource Guide for the Use of Social Media by School Staff*?

**Section Three – Comments for Information and Pages in the Resource**

**Guide**

Use section to record specific comments and notes about pages in the handbook.

Page # - Comment

## Appendix I - Main Field Test Instructions

January 10, 2012

Dear xxxx,

Thanks so much for agreeing to be a main field test reader for *A School Leader's Resource Guide for the Use of Social Media by School Staff*. Your participation and responses will provide the necessary feedback for improving the resource guide and making it more helpful.

In this package you will find the following materials:

1. A copy of "A School Leader's Resource Guide for the Facilitation of Social Media Use by School Staff" for review and evaluation;
2. A three page evaluation form;
3. A consent form;
4. A self-addressed stamped envelope to return the evaluation and the consent form.

Individuals have requested that I send a hard copy of the resource guide for ease in reading. However, if you would prefer an electronic copy, please email me at [dgooch@usd266.com](mailto:dgooch@usd266.com) and I will accommodate your request.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please complete the evaluation form with your responses while reviewing the handbook.
2. Sign the consent form.
3. Return the **consent form** and the **evaluation form** in the self-addressed envelope.

I respectfully request that you return the signed consent form and the completed evaluation form by February 10, 2012. The resource guide is yours to keep. However, if you have made comments on the resource guide and wish to send it to me, please contact me so that I may make arrangements to send you a postage paid envelope.

Thanks again for helping me with the main field test portion of the research. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call me at 316-519-6134 or 316-350-2029.

Sincerely,

Deanna L. Gooch

## Appendix J - Main Field Test Evaluation Form

### Evaluation Form for *A School Leader's Resource Guide for the Use of Social Media by School Staff*

**This evaluation has three sections:**

**Section One** – Evaluation of the format of the resource guide (organization, layout, etc.)

**Section Two** – Evaluation of the content of the resource guide (quality, relevance of content etc.)

**Section Three** – Specific comments about information and pages in the handbook

### Section One – Format of the Resource Guide

Rate the following characteristics of the resource guide on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
1. Content presented in a logical order	1	2	3	4	5
2. Organization of content	1	2	3	4	5
3. Readability of the text	1	2	3	4	5
4. Appropriate grammar and vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
5. Overall usability	1	2	3	4	5

**Please answer the following questions with as much detail as you feel is necessary:**

6. What corrections should be made in the writing and format of the guide?
7. What suggestions do you have for making the text more understandable or clear?

**Section Two – Content of the Resource Guide**

Rate the following characteristics of the handbook on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	
<b>Excellent</b>					
8. Practicality of the handbook	1	2	3	4	5
9. Content based on current research	1	2	3	4	5
10. Relevance of the content	1	2	3	4	5
11. Resource guide provides new information	1	2	3	4	5
12. Overall content quality	1	2	3	4	5

**Please answer the following questions in as much detail as you feel is needed:**

13. What parts of the content do you feel would be the most helpful to school leaders? What parts would be least helpful?

14. What are the strengths of *A School Leader’s Resource Guide for the Use of Social Media by School Staff*?

15. What are the weaknesses of *A School Leader’s Resource Guide for the Use of Social Media by School Staff*?

**Section Three – Comments for Information and Pages in the Resource**

**Guide**

Use section to record specific comments and notes about pages in the handbook.

Page # - Comment